

A BOY IN EIRINN



PADRAIC COLUM



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A BOY IN EIRINN

Little Schoolmate Series

EDITED BY
FLORENCE CONVERSE

IN SUNNY SPAIN

By Katharine Lee Bates

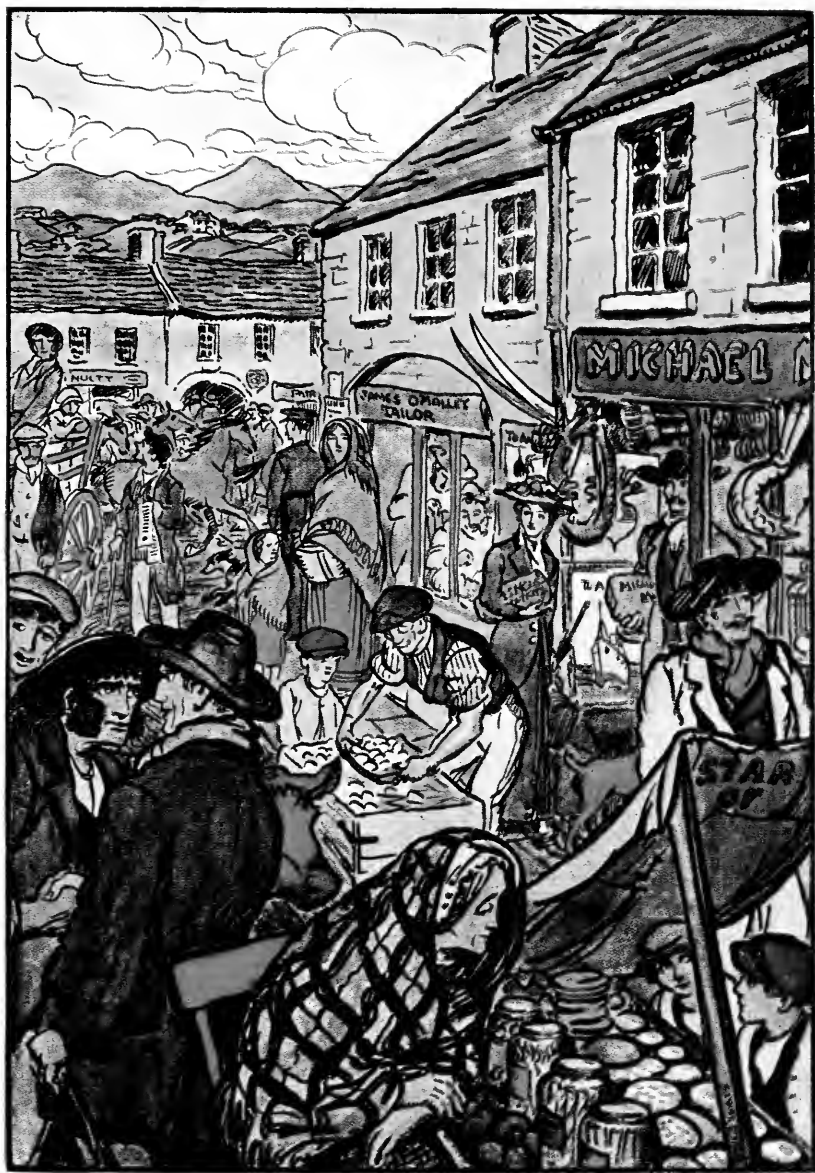
UNDER GREEK SKIES

By Julia D. Dragoumis

A BOY IN EIRINN

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Others in Preparation



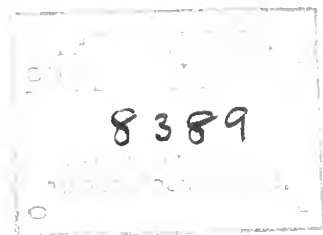
FINN GENERALLY BOUGHT TWO PIECES OF GINGERBREAD.

A BOY IN EIRINN

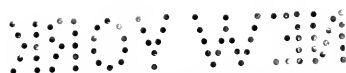
BY
PADRAIC COLUM



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A LETTER TO THE ONE WHO READS THIS BOOK.

DEAR LITTLE SCHOOLMATE:—

If only it were recess, and you and I and five or six other children were playing together, what a good time we should have! I need someone to play with today, for I have just thought of a new game, and games are always jollier when several people enjoy them together. But I suppose I shall have to turn this one into a sort of solitaire, as I am all alone in my study with nothing more human than a fountain pen for company. Not but what there are plenty of people and things less human than a fountain pen—at least, than my fountain pen. It can talk; don't you hear it—now? Sometimes I almost believe it can think. And I am quite sure it makes me think.

It made me think of the new game. I had just said: "Now come, we must write a letter to the little schoolmate all about the new story, which is all about Ireland,"—when the pen

said: "How much more fun it would be if we could play a game!" "What game?" said I. And immediately that helpful pen began to ripple out ideas till there was quite a brook.

And now he suggests that it won't be a game of solitaire after all, since here are three of us to play it together—you and he and I. He is really a very intelligent pen; don't you think so?

The name of the game is "A Penny for your Thoughts," and you play it by sitting in a circle around the leader, who sits in the middle. You and I shall have to sit in a circle around the fountain pen.

Come, pen, give us the word! Drop it into our minds as if it were a penny dropping into a slot, and let us see what will come out.

"Why," says the pen, "I thought we had decided that the word was to be Ireland. Isn't that what the new story-book is all about? Isn't that why we are playing the game?"

So now, little schoolmate, tell us what thought pops up to answer when you hear the word Ireland ringing like a little bell at the door of your mind. You and I shall take turns at thinking thoughts, and the pen will tell us

why we think them, and will make an Irish picture for us—a sort of frontispiece to this story-book.

Ready:—Ireland!

“Potatoes!” do you say?

“Ho, ho!” laughs the pen, “that’s easy. Everybody knows that potatoes grow in Ireland; and everybody who studies geography knows also that Irish potatoes are not Irish at all; they grew first in America, and America gave them to Ireland. But what everybody doesn’t know is how the potato drove Irishmen to America.

“In the middle of the nineteenth century in Ireland, much of the land was owned in great tracts by landlords who did not till the soil themselves but leased it out in little potato farms to the Irish peasants. For the landlords had discovered two things by experience: first, that land planted with potatoes would support three times as many people as land sown with wheat; and secondly, that land divided into small farms brought in more rent than land leased in one large farm. So these greedy landlords made their tenants plant potatoes, because the more acres there were in potatoes the

more tenants could live off the land, and the more tenants there were, the more rent went into the landlords' pockets.

"But, although the landlords knew so much, there were still a few things left for them to learn, by experience; and one was that although people can live if they have almost nothing but potatoes to eat, they are not as strong and healthy as they would be if they were fed chiefly on wheat; they fall ill more easily. And another thing they had to learn was that if you keep on planting the same crop on the same land, year after year, the land gets tired of the crop, and the crop gets tired of the land, and presently the crop fails. This is what happened in Ireland in 1846. The potatoes fell sick and rotted, and there was little else to eat. That meant famine, you know,—a dreadful word; a dreadful thing. And all because of the greedy landlords who knew so much,—and so little."

So now you know why the Irish began to go across the sea to America in such great numbers, in the middle of the last century. They were hungry; and in America there was bread to spare, as well as potatoes.

Do you like our game, little schoolmate?
Shall I take my turn now and tell you what I
think of when I hear the word Ireland?

I think of fairies.

“The little people,” the Irish call them.
There are old men and women in Ireland,—
yes, and in America too,—today, who can tell
you breathless tales of how their grandfathers
or grandmothers saw the little people dancing
on a lonely heath at midnight. Ireland is full
of fairy lore, some of it merry, some of it sad.
The Irish fairies are a whimsical race, fond of a
practical joke, but tenderhearted too. If you
want to know how they look, you must read
William Allingham’s poem called “The
Fairies.” This is the way it begins:—

“Up the airy mountains,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren’t go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl’s feather!”

and it goes on to tell how:—

“High on a hill-top
The old king sits;
He is now so old and gray
He’s nigh lost his wits.”

Very old he must be, for their wits are the last thing that the Irish, fairy-folk or human-folk, ever lose. And there is more in the poem, about how:—

“They stole little Bridget
For seven years long,—”

Another fairy poem, written many hundreds of years ago, tells us that:—

“They march amidst blue spears,
White curly-headed bands.”

These seem to be taller and stronger than the “little people,” cousins, perhaps, for the poet says:—

“No wonder, though, their strength be great:
Sons of kings and queens are one and all.
On all their heads are
Beautiful golden-yellow manes:

With smooth, comely bodies,
With bright, blue-starred eyes,

With pure crystal teeth,
With thin red lips—”

Now, if you ever go to Ireland and meet a fairy you will know him by his blue-starred eyes, and his crystal teeth, if he doesn't happen to be wearing a white owl's feather,—which is, of course, the surest sign of all.

But if you want to know more about the looks and the habits of Irish fairies, you must read the fairy books which Lady Augusta Gregory and Mr. Douglas Hyde and Mr. Joseph Jacobs have written. Indeed, I shouldn't wonder if Mr. Padraic Colum had tucked a fairy-tale or two into this very story-book of yours. Look and see!

Meanwhile, the fountain pen is tapping on the table and sputtering ink. He says that Ireland is famous for more things than fairies and potatoes, and it is time he had a chance to speak.

He says he thinks of St. Patrick when we talk of Ireland. He thinks of the sixteen-year-old boy from Roman Gaul who was stolen by pirates and sold into slavery, long ago. For six years the young Patrick was a herd boy in

Ireland, and he must have been a friendly lad, loving his enemies, for when at last he was freed and went back to Gaul, he saw always in his dreams the pagan children of Green Erin, holding out their little arms to him and calling: "Dear Christian child, return among us; return to save us." So after he had been made a bishop he went again to Ireland to preach Christianity to the kings and chiefs and poets of the country; and they all listened to him and loved him,—especially the poets. These Irish poets, or bards as they were called, were important folk at court in those old days; they were kings' counselors, and all men honored them. No great feast was complete without the bard and his harp; he kept fresh in men's minds the heroic deeds of their forefathers, and in time of war he filled the soldiers' hearts with courage. The most famous of these bards, Ossian, became Patrick's friend, and helped him to build some of the churches and monasteries whose ruins are still seen in Ireland. Some day you must read of the friendship of this Irish bard and the Gallic Saint, and of how they argued together about Christianity.

But St. Patrick is not the only saint for

whom Ireland is famous. There is not space enough in this letter for stories of all of them, but the pen insists that I shall tell you the name of at least one more, another missionary, St. Columba; but instead of being a missionary *to* Ireland, like St. Patrick, he was a missionary *from* Ireland. He crossed the Irish Sea to carry the message of Christianity to the wild tribes called the Picts, who lived, in those days, in Scotland. And it was particularly hard for St. Columba to be a missionary, for he loved Ireland as little children love their mothers; he was homesick if he was away from those green hills and shining lakes, even for a day. Yet he went away into a strange land and lived there the half of his long life. He left his beloved for love's sake.

This is how it came about: St. Columba, like some of the rest of us, was fond of books, and in those days books were very great treasures, for they all had to be copied by hand. There were no printing presses. And it happened one day when Columba was visiting a friend of his, the Abbot Finnian, that the abbot, to entertain him, showed him a beautiful Psalter—a book of Psalms—which belonged to

the monastery. Now St. Columba coveted the Psalter, and when he was left alone with it he set to work to copy the Psalms out for himself carefully by hand. It was discourteous of him, to say the least, not to ask the abbot's permission, and it is not surprising that the abbot was angry when he found out what his guest was up to. He and St. Columba had a lively Irish quarrel; the abbot said the copy belonged to him, because the Psalter was his; St. Columba contradicted him flat, and so they had it back and forth: "It's mine!"—"No such thing; it's mine!"—"You're a thief!"—"You're a liar!"—and so on. It sounds very childish, doesn't it? But it threw poor Ireland into a sad state, for the kings and chieftains took sides in the quarrel, some with the abbot and some with St. Columba, and there was battle and bloodshed and the horror of war throughout the green island. And at last St. Columba came to his senses and saw what he had done, and he was very sorry and ashamed.

And because he had offended against God by quarreling with his neighbor, and by setting his fellow-countrymen against one another and sowing seeds of hate where he might have

sown love, he decided that to bring peace to Ireland, he, the quarrel-maker, must go away and live somewhere else; he, who had sent many men to death in an unchristian battle, must bring living souls to Christ; he, the sower of hate, must be a harvester of love. So he went to Scotland to be a missionary, and the story of his life on the little island of Iona on the Scotch coast is too long to tell here, but you must surely read it some day in the book of his life by Adamnan, or in Monsieur Montalembert's series of Saint-stories called "The Monks of the West."

And now, do you think you can play this game by yourself, without the pen and me? Try! What else do you think of when you hear the word Ireland? Perhaps Mr. Colum's story of Finn O'Donnell will help you.

Affectionately yours,

FLORENCE CONVERSE.

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A BOY IN EIRINN

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CHAPTER I

HOW FINN O'DONNELL GOT HIS NAME

FINN O'DONNELL had a father and mother, of course, and in addition to these two grandmothers and a grandfather. Now, on the day he was born and the day following that there was great debate in the house concerning the name to be given him. His father wanted to call him Matthew after a comrade who had gone to America, and his mother wished to name him Dominick after her own father. It might have been settled to call the child Matthew Dominick or Dominick Mathew, only his grandfather interposed with an extraordinary name.

"Call him Finn," said he, "Finn O'Donnell. Finn MacCoul was the best of Ireland's heroes and it's time that one of the O'Donnells should bear his name."

Thereupon the house became filled with

argument. Finn was not the name of any saint nor of any pious person, said his mother's mother; Finn was not a name in either family, said his father's mother, and for her part, she did not see why the child should not be called Manus after his grandfather who was the head of the house. No one they knew had the name of Finn, said his father; it was the name that might be given to a hound, and the child that had it would be mocked at. It wasn't right, said his mother, that her child should be given a name out of old stories.

The child's grandfather left the three women and the man to debate the question amongst themselves and went out to the garden to dig round his gooseberry bushes.

The next day, towards dusk, the child's father came out for him and brought him into the room where the women were. Everybody was silent now.

"We give in to your choice," said the father, and "We will call him Finn to please you," said the mother.

Thereupon the grandfather went to his chest and taking his purse out of it produced three golden sovereigns which he laid down as an

offering for the child. The next day he was christened and given the name of Finn.

It was his grandfather, Manus O'Donnell, who owned the house in which Finn, his father and mother and grandmother lived. Before it was a garden with gooseberry and currant bushes and with a bee-hive placed in the shelter of a ditch. In the warm days the young calves lay in this garden and the bees hummed round the currant bushes. A high fuchsia hedge divided it from the roadway and a fuchsia bush with scarlet and purple pendants grew before the door. The road that went by the house was nearly always empty, but one could hear the carts creaking on another road that was across the bog. This road went from the country town to the villages in the mountains and one could see, behind the carts, the mountain horses striding along, each carrying a man with a woman seated behind him. Always above that country there were big gray clouds, and across it, marking one field from another, ran little walls of loose stones. One could see smooth mown fields with cocks of hay beside dark-green fields of potatoes and little fields of yellowing corn. Houses were scattered here and

there; they were low, whitewashed and thatched with straw that had become brown in the weather.

Finn's grandfather was a weaver. Inside the house there were two great looms, the wood of which, though hard and massive, was filled with little holes. The floor of the kitchen was covered with flags that were cracked in many places; the walls were brown and the rafters black with smoke. The fire was not on the grate; it was laid on the stones of the hearth, and it was not of coal, but of sods of peat ¹ or turf, as they are called in Ireland. Out of the wide, projecting chimney a crook descended, on which a pot or a kettle was always hanging. The house had two doors in a single doorway: the outer one was so low that a child could look across it; it was kept closed against the hens during the day-time, and at night the full inner door was closed behind it. Near the door was a dresser filled with plates and dishes, mugs, jugs and cups, and hung round with shining tins. Between the dresser and the hearth was a sort of wooden sofa that could be opened into a bed; it was called the settle, and strangers who came to the house slept in it. There was

also a great press, a big wooden chest, stools, and a wooden chair at the hearth for Finn's grandmother or grandfather. Near the door was a harness-rack that held a saddle and bridle and a horse's collar. There were three cages on the walls—a linnet was in one, a goldfinch in another and a lark in the third.

This was the kitchen. There were two rooms off it and a loft above it. The room in which his grandfather and grandmother slept was full of sacred pictures, and it had a shrine with a little lamp burning before it. In the room that was his father's and mother's there were brass instruments that had been left by his uncle Bartley who was now living in the town, and there was a clock that was called "Wag o' the Wall." It was a clock-face only with weights and chains hanging down. This clock had a loud tick and when it came near striking it would stop like a person catching breath.

Outside there was a stack of black peat that was fuel for the year, and near it was the shed for the donkey cart and the horse cart. At the side of the house was the byre or stable in which the two cows, the two calves and the horse were

kept and in which the hens roosted at night. The ass and the goats were left to themselves and they had taken shelter in the shed beside the carts; and the geese, when they returned in the evening, would settle themselves under the shelter of the upturned carts.

Finn's grandfather, as I have told you, was a weaver. The people would leave him yarn at a certain time of the year and he would weave it into the gray cloth they used for their dress. He once had several men working in the house with him but the people bought in the shops more and more and now there was not so much work to be done at the looms. Manus and his son John, Finn's father, did all the weaving that came to them and they were not busy now. Besides their looms they had three fields and they owned two cows, a horse, and sheep and pigs. Often Finn's father went over to England or Scotland to work there in the harvest, and then his grandfather, with the women helping him, mowed the field, dug the potatoes and reaped the oats. Finn's mother, before she was married, had been in America where she had earned her dowry—that is the money she possessed when she got married.

Finn's grandfather was very much honored in the district. He remembered the histories, the stories and poems that had been handed down, and he read Irish manuscripts which he had collected. He had the secret of making medicine from herbs and was reputed to have a cure for cancer. People from far places would come to consult him about this disease, and they would often stay a night in the house sleeping in the settle bed. He spoke Irish and English, but his wife, Finn's grandmother, spoke Irish only, and Finn's father and mother spoke English mainly. Finn, like his grandfather, spoke both languages.

As little Finn grew up he was much in the company of his grandfather, who taught him to be proud of the name he had given him. But the first day he went to school the teacher showed that she thought Finn was an unusual name, and the children, when it was called off the roll, laughed at it. After a while, however, everyone got used to it and there was no more about it than if Manus O'Donnell's grandson had been called John or James. People told him that he had his name from Finn MacCoul, and some said that this Finn was a

giant and others that he was a soldier who had fought for Ireland.

Once, when his uncle Bartley was taking him across a field, Finn saw three great stones, two upright and a third laid across. So high were the upright stones that a man could not reach their tops, and with the third laid across they were as high as a man with a boy standing on his shoulders. His uncle told him that these were stones that the mighty men of the old days in Ireland put above their friends. And he told him, too, that Finn MacCoul, or one of Finn's men, was buried under the stones. When he went home that evening he asked his grandfather to tell him about the Finn MacCoul after whom he was named. And that night while a great piece of bog-wood blazed in the fire his grandfather told the child the story of The Boyhood of Finn MacCoul.²

CHAPTER II

THE BOYHOOD OF FINN MAC COUL

YOU must know, my young hero, that our country was once defended by a band of heroes called the Fianna of Ireland. It was required of each that he should have truth in his heart and strength in his hands and that he should be faithful to whatever captain was placed over the band. Now the first captain was Trenmor and the second was Coul, the son of Trenmor. Coul made many enemies and they all joined together under the leadership of a lord named Goll, the son of Morna. Goll's men went into battle with Coul's men and defeated them. Goll cut off the head of Coul and became Captain of the Fianna of Ireland. Now there was also a bag of treasures which the Captain of the Fianna possessed. This bag did not come into the hands of Goll, for it was taken away by the keeper of Coul's treasures. It was a wonderful bag, made out of

the skin of a heron and containing magical things. Goll was not fully captain while he was without this bag.

Coul left one son behind him and he, being in dread of Goll, who now served the King of Ireland, went into Scotland and took service there with a King. And another son was born to Coul's wife after her husband was killed. She gave him the name of Demna and being fearful that Goll or some of his friends would hear of his existence and kill him she gave the child into the charge of a wise woman.

This woman carried the little child through solitude after solitude until she came to the Sleeve Bloom mountains in the middle of Ireland. She built a hut there and reared Demna in a wood. He was soon able to race the hare in the meadow and capture the wild duck and her brood on the lake. One day he ran down a deer and caught it and brought it back to the hut. And when the wise woman saw him return with his capture she knew that he was fit to go into the world to seek his own. So she told him of his father and bade him go forth and win for himself the captainship of the noble Fianna of Ireland.

So young Demna went through the woods and plains of Ireland eating wild fruits and catching the deer and the hare for his food. He came near the place where Dublin now stands, and there on a green level place he saw hurley a-playing, twelve a side. And with the stick he had in his hand young Demna joined in the game. He kept the ball so much to himself that the youths sent six of the players against him, but in spite of such odds Demna won the game. The youths told the Prince of the strange boy who was so strong and so active and the Prince asked them to describe him.

“He is fair-haired,” they said.

Then the Prince named the boy “Finn,” that is, fair-haired. The next day when he appeared the youths called out, “Here is Finn,” and that was the way he got his name.

Well, they saw he was going to enter the game again and so they sent eight against him. Finn played against the eight boys and won the game. He went away after that, but the next day he appeared again and this time the twenty-four boys defended a goal against him. But he won past them for all their efforts.

Then the boys raised their hurl-sticks and attacked him, but Finn laid about him so well with his hurl that he laid several prostrate on the ground.

He went towards the south then, and came to a blacksmith's house where he stayed for a time.

"Make me two spears," he said to the smith.

The smith made him the spears and Finn when he got them into his hands started off. The smith warned him not to take a certain path through the forest, for there was a boar there that had destroyed half a county. Finn took the pass and came upon the boar. He plunged at the beast and killed him with his spear. Then he brought the dead boar back to the smith as payment for the spears.

While Finn was in that country he took service with a prince. While he was in that service he showed such strength and such courage that the prince often said:—

"Only I know that Coul left only one son and that he is in service with the King of Scotland, I would think that this boy was the son of Coul and the grandson of Trenmor."

And everything the boy did showed such no-

bility that the prince was at last convinced that Finn was the son of Coul and the rightful captain of the Fianna of Ireland.

Then he called the boy to him and told him that he would like him to leave his service. Many, he said, thought he was the son of Coul and the prince would not like that he was killed while under his protection. Finn then asked for some information about his father's friends and followers and he was told that in Connacht an old man named Crimmal was living and that this Crimmal was the last of Coul's friends who had survived the cruelty of Goll and Goll's friends.

So young Finn MacCoul set out for Connacht, and I can tell you that he met with many adventures on the way. One day he came upon a woman weeping as if every tear she shed was a drop of blood.

Finn asked her why she wept like that.

"I weep because my son has been slain," she said. "A man who passed this way has killed him. My grief is great because I know no one who would avenge my son."

Finn went upon the track of the slayer of the young man. He came upon him cleaning

his sword by a stream, and when he saw Finn he ran at him with the naked sword in his hand. But the boy guarded himself well with the spear, and his skill and strength of arm were such that he was able to give the man the death-thrust.

"Thou art a hero indeed," said the man, "and I deserve to be slain by the hand of a stranger, for I forsook my chief Coul, the son of Trenmor and took his treasure with me. Take from my breast, young man," said he, "a bag you shall find. It was made from the skin of a heron and in it are the magical weapons which were given to Trenmor by the people of the Fairy Race."

Finn took the bag and went singing the song of his victory along the ways to Connacht.

Crimmal was old and no longer able to hunt and there was little to eat in the hut he had built for himself. He was sorrowful then when a youth came into his hut and asked for hospitality.

"Alas," he said, "I have nothing here but roots and water."

Then the youth went outside and brought in a deer which he had killed and offered to share

the meat with Crimmal in return for the shelter of the hut.

"If Coul, my chief, had left a son I would say that you are he," said the old man to Finn.

Then Finn told him that he was indeed the son of Coul and related how he had been reared by a wise woman in the Sleeve Bloom mountains, and the adventures that had happened to him since he left his first home.

"I ask no other proof than your appearance, your strength, your courage and your generosity," Crimmal said. "And if you had the skin bag that belongs to the race of Trenmor, then in a while you could set out to obtain that which rightfully belongs to you, the Captainship of the Fianna of Ireland."

Finn drew from his breast the wonderful bag and showed Crimmal the magical things that were in it. Everything had fallen out so lucky for the youth that Crimmal was satisfied that he would come into his own.

Once again Finn was being trained in a hut in the woods. This time he was instructed by Crimmal in everything befitting a youth who would come to be Captain of the noble Fianna of Ireland. No one who was ignorant of the

art of poetry was permitted to enter the Fianna. Crimmal taught Finn the art and when he had composed a poem upon May day, Crimmal said to him:—

“You have nothing more to learn of me and you are now of an age to strive with the world. Go forth, therefore, and win what belongs to you—the captainship of the noble Fianna of Ireland.”

And so Finn bade good-bye to Crimmal and he went to Tara, to the court of Conn, the High King of Ireland. And Conn received him well, for the appearance of Finn was noble, and his strength and skill and courage were manifest to all. And on the recommendation of the High King the youth was received into the ranks of the Fianna of Ireland. And it began to be rumoured that the youth was the son of Coul and the grandson of Trenmor.

There was a danger now that he would be slaughtered by Goll or one of Goll’s friends, but the High King took him under his protection and Finn’s life was safe as long as the Fianna were at Tara.

One night after the banquet, King Conn said, “Tonight I am afraid.”

And all who were there except Finn knew why the King was afraid. The morrow would be the festival of November, and on the eve of that festival every year for three years past a goblin used to come down from the hills and burn a portion of the royal mansion of Tara. None of the King's men could withstand this goblin.

When Finn heard the reason of the King's terror he said, "Will none of the noble Fianna guard the royal mansion from this goblin?"

"No man can face the goblin, and this evening, surely, Tara will be destroyed."

Then said Finn, "If I face and overcome this goblin will you, O King, give me what is my right and my due—the Captainship of the Fianna of Ireland?" And all who were present were astonished at the bold words of the young man.

Then Finn went on and declared himself the son of Coul and the grandson of Trenmor, and he cared not that the friends of Goll MacMorna had their hands upon their swords.

Then said Goll, "Let this braggart youth face the goblin, O King, and if he overcomes him I will let him take the captainship of the

Fianna of Ireland, and I myself and all my clan and friends will give him our allegiance."

And the King praised the words of Goll MacMorna and bade Finn make himself ready for the conflict with the goblin.

As he went out of the banqueting hall Finn remembered the advice of Crimmal. It was that in any conflict with a supernatural being he was to put upon his spear-shaft the spear-head that was in the heron-skin bag. So he changed the spear-head and stood on guard on the rampart that was before the King's mansion. And before dawn something that had the appearance of a bull with eyes blazing like torches tried to rush past him. Finn struck the thing on the forehead with the magical spear-head. It changed and became a great serpent that tried to crush Finn with its coils. Again Finn struck it with the spear-head. Then the thing became an eagle that rose with blazing wings towards the roof of the mansion. Finn hurled his spear and pierced its wing. It fell to the ground, and when Finn ran to the spot where it fell, something in the appearance of a man rose and ran towards the wood. And as Finn ran down the wild deer in the

forests and on the hills of Ireland so he ran down the goblin. Before he had entered the dark wood, Finn had captured him. He became a tree then with roots in the earth and Finn tore off the branches. In the morning he entered the banqueting-hall with the branches in his arms. No one in the company had ever expected to see him again, for all thought he had been carried off by the goblin.

“The goblin will never threaten royal Tara again, and the branches that I throw upon the ground are his limbs.”

He threw them in the middle of the flagged floor and immediately they went into a great blaze.

Then the King was satisfied that the goblin had been overcome, and he held Goll Mac-Morna to the word he had spoken as Captain of the Fianna of Ireland—a word that could never be gainsaid—that he would give his allegiance to Finn MacCoul as captain of the Fianna.

And so the youthful Finn MacCoul became head of the noble Fianna of Ireland, and while he lived our country had strength and prosperity; and if I were to tell you all the great things

he did and the wonderful events that happened to him I should keep talking to you from the Feast of Saint Bridget in February to the feast of Sowain³ before November Day.

CHAPTER III

THE ARREST

AT the time that Finn O'Donnell was going to school there was great trouble all through Ireland. If you had been in the country at the time, and had spoken to a man like Finn's grandfather, you would have been told that the trouble came because the people who worked on the fields did not own them. The land of Ireland had been conquered from its original owners in various wars and portions of it had been given to men who were on the conqueror's side. Their descendants, and people connected with their descendants, were now the landlords of Ireland.

If a peasant family wanted to raise crops and stock on a certain piece of land, they had to enter into an agreement with some landlord to pay him a share of what they earned out of the land. This share was called rent. In Ireland it was always too high and its payment

generally left the family poor. A while before Finn was born the landlord could evict—that is, he could put the family away from the house they had built and the fields they had cleared—if he did not approve of their religion, or of the way they voted at an election, or if he thought he could get another family to pay him a better rent—that is a bigger share of their earnings. But this power had now been taken from the landlord and he could only evict if the family failed to pay him the rent agreed upon.

It was often hard to make up this rent. In the years that Finn O'Donnell was going to school it was harder than ever because the prices the farmers got for their produce—their cattle, sheep and calves, their corn, butter and potatoes—had fallen very low. Landlords were evicting their tenants in every part of Ireland.

Near where Finn lived there was a poor village called Cahirdoney. Every family in it was evicted one rainy day. Finn, very frightened, followed his grandfather down to the village. He saw houses being knocked down by beams swung against them. Policemen were

there with rifles in their hands and English soldiers were there in their red uniforms.

"Will they pull down granny's house?" Finn heard a little girl say to a young woman who was standing in the rain. "And Mrs. Sullivan's, and she with the baby? And Cahill's where the children used to make the play in? It makes you feel awful lonesome, doesn't it, Bridget?"

His grandfather made a speech to the people, telling them that they must join a League which had just been started, a League which was formed to help the people who were evicted and to protect those who were not able to pay their rents.

The policemen pushed Finn's grandfather away.

Afterwards, a hut was built for policemen who guarded the place. One night guns were fired into this hut. No one was hurt but the government was resolved to deal very severely with the people who were mixed up in the affair, and at last three men were arrested. One of them was Finn's father. The men were put upon their trial and they were sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

Finn's mother and grandfather were at the trial, and he remembered their coming back to the house. The grandfather, speaking in Irish, told the grandmother the result of the trial, and his mother took him on her knees and sat silently rocking him. That night people came into the house and Finn was put to bed early.

Next day he heard his mother tell his grandfather and grandmother that she would go to America and work there until near the time when his father would be released. She took him with her the next time she went to visit his father. She had been crying, but she ceased to weep when she took the boy into the place where his father was standing with men guarding him. His mother kissed him and he cried and then she mounted him on a stool where he could watch where the swallows were building their nest.

They went home together on the cart and his mother talked to him the whole time, telling him how good his father was and how she would miss her husband and her child while she was far away. His father then was taken

to another gaol and a week afterwards his mother went to America.

Afterwards the house was very lonely. His grandmother became more silent than ever; she did her work in the house without speaking to anyone, and at night when she sat by the fire she made only a few remarks to Finn's grandfather or to the old men or women who came in. His grandfather sat by the loom all day, and at night he read the manuscripts that he took out of the chest or talked to the people about the old times in Ireland. His uncle Bartley often took Finn on the cart he used to drive and showed him many things on the road and in the town where he lived.

CHAPTER IV

ONE OF FINN'S DAYS

THIS is the way Finn O'Donnell spent many a day while he lived in his grandfather's house. In the morning, after he rose, he would take a gallon can off the table and go to the well that was in the pasture field. Coming back he would carry the can the length of the field without resting, but on the roadway he would leave it down and rest many times. The can became heavier and heavier until he set it down on the floor of the house. By this time his grandfather would have brought in peat from the rick and his grandmother would have raked away the ashes that covered the glowing embers of last night's fire; fresh peat would have been put round them and a fire would be burning on the hearth. The pot would then be hung from the crook and when the water boiled his grandmother would put handfuls of meal into it and start the porridge



cooking. After a while the pot would be taken off the crook and laid beside the fire and Finn would be set to watch and stir it. Tea was made then, for his grandfather took porridge and tea and his grandmother tea only. Finn was given porridge, and when he had taken it he was ready for school and he would start off with two books in his hand and two pieces of bread in his pocket.

There were two ways to school—one, an old disused road, and the other, the main thoroughfare to the town. If Finn met other children and if it were in the bright months of the year, the company went by the old road. Grass grew along the sides and nearly into the middle of the road and briars threw out long branches, a donkey grazed along it and some geese lifted wings and necks as the children passed. In a hollow tree wild bees had their nest, and the children stopped to watch them going in and out of the hole. The first bird's nest that Finn was ever shown was upon the old road. It was a robin's, and when he looked in Finn saw a brown, bright-eyed creature that hardly seemed a bird at all. High in the trees there were pigeons' and jay-thrushes' nests, and the big-

ger boys often ventured to climb up to them. They never got so high; nor did they find the nests of the water-hens that swam across the stream.

Going into school the children would be searching their pockets for pieces of slate-pencil, for the first lesson was arithmetic which they worked out on slates. They stood in a half-circle round the black-board and when they had finished a sum they would hold up the slates for the teacher's inspection. After arithmetic Finn sat down to write in a headline copy book; afterwards he read out of a lesson-book, learned his catechism, practiced at arithmetic again and at reading, writing and spelling. The children had recreation for a half hour at twelve o'clock and at three they went home.

When he came from school Finn had many things to do. He had to go several times to the well, bring the goats to a place where they could forage for themselves without doing much damage, search for the donkey or watch the cows while they grazed by the side of the road. He would often go to the village of Far-

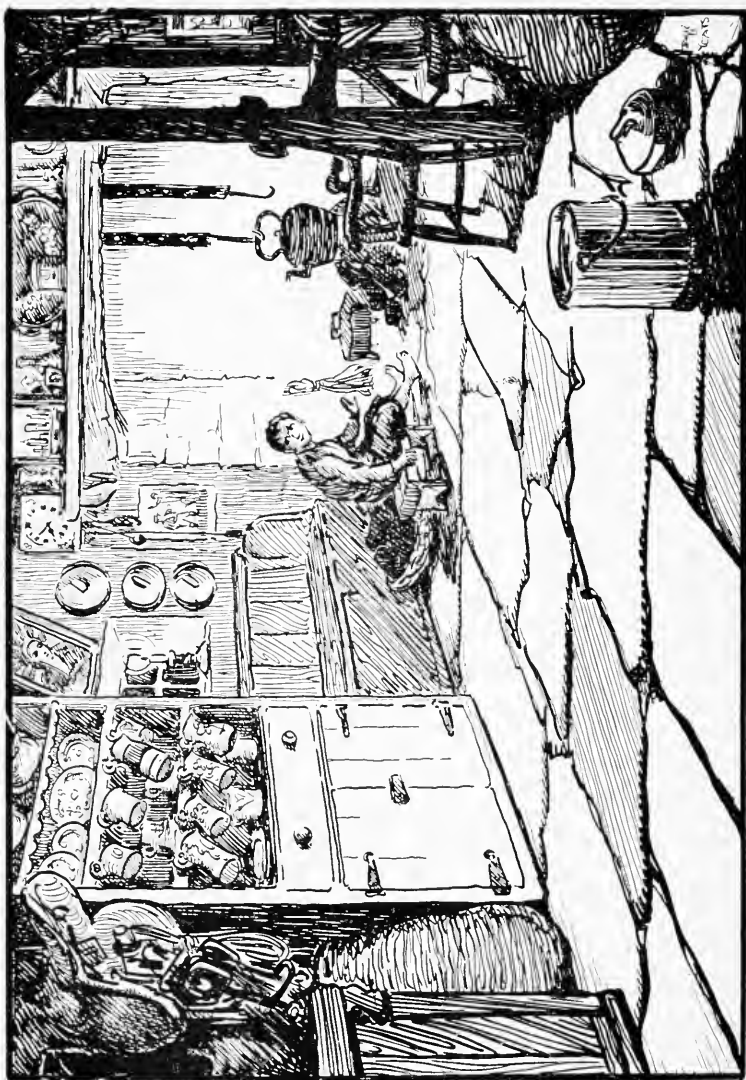
ranboley and play with the children there. His greatest trouble was in going back to the town for tea or sugar, snuff or tobacco. Coming back in the evening he would run all the way, for he had heard much of spirits and ghosts and fairies and he did not like to be far from home when darkness began to come on the empty roads and fields.

He liked to see night falling while he looked over the half-door. The cows came up the laneway mooing to themselves and went into the byre; the goats followed briskly behind the donkey and bit at the tops of the hedges before they took shelter; the hens left off scratching in the yard and one by one went to roost in the byre. Two wild-ducks that had dodged about the yard all day now stole off by themselves; they had been hatched from eggs taken out of a wild-duck's nest, and as they had been reared amongst the tame fowl they did not know themselves as wild, they had a life to themselves and were always furtive, watchful and very cautious. Then there was a guinea-hen that went about the yard looking lonely and depressed and often giving utterance to a long and sad

cry. The geese would march back with the goats and the donkey and take shelter near them under the upturned cart.

Sometimes Finn would go into the stable to help unharness the horse when his grandfather and grandmother would come back from the fair. When the evenings were dark he would bring out a candle or a lantern. While he held the light he would observe all the curious things in the stable. The horse stood still while his grandfather, speaking to it now and then, undid the harness or made ready the oats for its meal, the cows lay by the manger and the hens murmured together as they roosted on the beams above.

His grandmother told him that the hens, when they murmured together like that, were telling each other where the Danes had hidden their treasures. It was the Danes, she told him, who had brought the hens to Ireland; they were beaten in battle by King Brian Boru and then they took ship and went back to their own country. But first they hid their treasures—cups of gold, swords with gold hilts, pots filled with golden coins. Every night the hens on the roost spoke of these treasures and if one



knew their language one would know where the Danes had hidden them.

At night when Finn sat by the fire with the door closed and the candles burning in the window recesses the things of the house became curious. The big sods of fresh peat sank down into the heart of the fire, and in the deep white ashes round them little threads of flame ran like living things. Crickets chirruped in the ashes and between the hearth-stones and in holes up the wide chimney, and the light of the fire was on the dresser with its tins and on the big looms. It was at such a time that Finn would listen most attentively to the story told at the fire. Sometimes a stranger who had come to consult his grandfather sat there until all the others had gone to bed. And one such visitor, a woman who had travelled all the way from the County Cavan told Finn this story of the Children of Lir.⁴

CHAPTER V

THE CHILDREN OF LIR

BEFORE Saint Patrick came there was a prince in Ireland whose name was Lir. He was powerful and was very much honoured but he lived away from his friends. Prince Lir was a disappointed man; he thought that he should have been made king over his people in Ireland but his name had been passed over and the kingship was awarded to a prince named Bove Derg.

But Bove Derg, from the time he became king, was anxious for the friendship and alliance of Prince Lir, and so when he heard that Lir's wife had died he sent messengers to the Prince to tell him that if he desired to marry again he would give him for wife one of the three most beautiful princesses in Ireland.

After a while of mourning, Lir made a journey to the court of the King, and there he saw the three who were the most beautiful

princesses in Ireland: Eve, Eva and Aelva.

He asked the King for the hand of the eldest, Princess Eve, in marriage.

Well, they were married and lived happily for years, and twin children were born to them twice, first a girl and a boy who were named Finoola and Ae, and then two boys who were named Fiachra and Conn. And after these children were born the Princess Eve died.

Then Lir was plunged into sorrow again and he ceased to attend the Assemblies of the nobles.

Now the King heard of his loss and he sent messengers to him saying, "The two most beautiful princesses in Ireland are under my care. If Lir can recover from his sorrow and wed again, the one he chooses shall be given to him."

So after a while Prince Lir presented himself at the court of King Bove Derg and he saw there the Princesses Eva and Aelva, and he asked for the hand of Princess Eva in marriage. And they were married, and Lir brought Eva back to the house where his children were.

Now the four children, Finoola, Ae, Fiachra

and Conn, had grown in such beauty that the King and the nobles, when they were at the mansion of Prince Lir, desired to have them always in their sight. And their father loved them exceedingly. Every morning he rose before dawn and came into the chamber where the children lay and watched them long. But his wife had no children of her own, and she grew more and more jealous of the love that her husband had for them, until at last she pretended to be ill, and for a whole year she lay in bed meditating on ways to destroy them.

The people said that while she lay with evil designs in her mind the beings that cause misfortune and ill-luck came to her and that she herself came then into their power. That might well be. However, she rose up one day and ordered her chariot to be harnessed, and bade Finoola, Ae, Fiachra and Conn make ready to come with her on a journey.

Prince Lir was away at the time.

Finoola had dreamed that Eva intended treachery against them and she was loth that the children should go on that journey. But the three boys, Ae, Fiachra and Conn, saw the steeds being caught and yoked to the chariot

and they became anxious to go. Then Finoola decided to go with them. And when they were at the borders of a dark wood, far from the mansion of Prince Lir, Eva said to the servants who followed on horseback:

“Kill the children. For their sakes their father has ceased to love me. If you bring them within the wood and kill them there I shall give you anything you like in this world.”

But the servants said, “It is a wicked deed you have spoken of. The children of Prince Lir shall not be injured by us.”

Then Eva took a sword and came to the children, intending to kill them with the naked blade, but her heart shrank from it and she turned back and called the children away from the edge of that dark wood.

The children had been sleeping all the time, and now their step-mother put them into the chariot and bade the servants return home. She drove on and on until they came to the shore of Dairbhreach. She stopped the chariot there and desired the children to go and bathe in the lake. Then when they were in the water she struck them with a wand and transformed them into four white swans.

“Ye shall be a hundred years on this lake,” she said, “and after that ye shall be a hundred years on the Sea of Moyle, and after that ye shall be a hundred years on the waters in another place.”

And when she said this Eva repented of her wicked deed and she said:

“I shall not be able to give you relief nor any of the love I might have given ye. But there are favours I shall not deny ye. Ye shall have your speech, the melodious Gaelic, and ye shall be able to make music that will draw human beings to hear ye, and ye shall not lose your human nature while ye are in the form of birds.” And then she said, “Depart from me now, O Children of Lir. Sad for me will be the lamentations of your father.”

Then she mounted the chariot and drove to the house of the King. And when Bove Derg heard that the wife of Prince Lir had come he went to her and asked if she had brought the children for a visit.

“I have not brought them,” she said, “for you, O King, are not in favour with their father, and he fears that you should do some wrong to them.”

And when Bove Derg heard that, he sent messengers to Prince Lir asking him to let Finoola and Ae, Fiachra and Conn pay him a visit.

"Did the children not come with the Princess Eva?" Lir asked the messengers. And when he heard that they were not with her he knew that some wrong had been done them. He mounted his chariot and drove furiously on until he came to the shore of Lake Dairbhreach. And when he drew near the lake he saw the swans upon the water and he heard them singing intelligible words. He spoke to the birds, and he asked them how it was that they had human voices.

"O Father," they said, "we are your children and an evil woman has enchanted us, changing us into swans."

Lir was made desolate when he heard these words.

"Will anything bring you back to your own forms, O my beautiful children?" he cried.

And Finoola drew near the shore, and she told him that they should come back to their own forms at a time that was far in the future. Their father would not be in the land of the

living then, the place where his house was would be forgotten and his name would hardly be remembered.

“And what relief can we give you, my children?” Lir asked.

“No relief,” Finoola said. “We may not go ashore nor be cherished by you, but we have our speech still and our human nature and we have been granted the gift of music.”

Lir and his people encamped by the shore of the lake and the swans chanted and made such music for them that the minds of all were composed, and even their father, despite his heavy loss, was soothed; and when he and his people departed they were not in anguish. They heard the music the swans made for a long way on their journey.

So much of “The Children of Lir” was told to Finn the first night the woman sat by his grandfather’s fire and the second night she ended the tale.

For a hundred years Finoola and Ae, Fiachra and Conn were on Lake Dairbhreach and for a hundred years they had their father and

their father's people near them. They heard of the doom that had befallen their step-mother. Prince Lir went to the mansion of Bove Derg and when the King asked him had he brought his children, Lir replied:

"Alas, O King, they are now in the forms of four white swans, for Eva, your own nursling, has enchanted them."

The King went to the place where Eva was. She rose up when he drew near and said:

"My deed is worse for me than for them. They shall have relief before the end of time and their souls will be in Heaven at last. But for me there shall be no relief." And saying that she changed before his face and became a demon of the air.

Often the King and Prince Lir and their people were by the shore of the lake conversing with Finoola, Ae, Fiachra and Conn. And the swans made such music that the sick people who heard it slept easily and soundly and those who were well became happy. And as the children of Lir kept their speech and had their father and their friends to converse with them they were not unhappy.

But one night Finoola gathered the others

around her and she said, "We have come to the end of our term. Tomorrow we must rise from this lake and depart for the Sea of Moyle."

And Ae, Fiachra and Conn became very sorrowful when they heard that, for they thought they were as human beings as long as they stayed on the waters of Lake Dairbhreach with their father and their friends to converse with them.

The next day they spoke to their father and to the King and they told them they should have to depart and that never again should they see their father and their friends. And the swans greatly lamented that they would have to leave the waters of their home-lake for the cold, dark and stormy Sea of Moyle.

And then the four rose up singing, "Farewell to you, O Father, and farewell to you, O King. Where we go we shall not hear the sound of the human voice nor shall we again engage in converse with our kind. Alone shall we be on the Sea of Moyle."

And when they had flown out of sight and their singing was heard no more their father and the King turned towards their mansions,

and they saw each other as withered and feeble men, for a hundred years had passed since they heard the first singing of the swans upon the lake.

And as for Finoola, Ae, Fiachra and Conn, they felt when they plunged down into the cold, wide Sea of Moyle that all the evil they had suffered was as nothing to what was before them now. One night a great tempest came down upon the sea. Finoola gathered her three brothers to her and she told them that if the tempest of the night separated them one from another they were each to fly to the Rock of the Seals and wait for one another there. Midnight came and the wind arose and the Children of Lir were driven from each other. Finoola, when dawn came, found herself alone upon the waters.

“O my three brothers,” she sang, “I wish that today ye had the shelter of my feathers. My heart is broken because of this separation from Ae and Fiachra and little Conn.”

She came to the Rock of the Seals and remained there looking out upon the wide, empty sea. Then she saw Conn coming towards her with feathers drenched, and after she had taken

him under her wings Fiachra came, so cold and faint that no word he said was understood.

"If Ae were with us now," said she, "how happy would we be!"

And at noon they saw Ae coming with his head dry and his feathers beautiful. She welcomed him and put him under the feathers of her breast (Fiachra was under her right and Conn under her left wing).

The night came with frost and snow and tempest, and all the time Finoola kept her brothers under her wings and breast. And the swans told each other of the household of Prince Lir; of soft, warm clothes and of the fires in the hall; of the fruits and wine; of the harpers playing music and of the gay company at the feast. And many such nights of cold and tempest the Children of Lir knew while they were abroad on the wide sea of Moyle.

But their hundred years passed, and then the swans rose up from the Sea of Moyle and flew again over Ireland.

It had been shown to Finoola that she and her three brothers would regain their own forms when Saint Patrick came and preached Christianity in Ireland. During the next hun-

dred years they would hear of the Saint's arrival. So with the knowledge that they were entering on the last period of their enchantment they flew over the plains and rivers of Ireland.

And they turned aside to visit the place where Lir's mansion stood. And there was nothing there now but grassy mounds and unroofed buildings and forests of nettles.

They lamented in that empty place for a while and there were none to hear what they cried.

Then they flew off to Connacht, to the bay where they were to spend the next hundred years. And they were there so long that they thought the hundred years had gone by. But one day Fiachra heard a curious sound upon the shore. He told Finoola of it and she said, "What you have heard is the sound of a bell. That sound tells us that the worship of the true God has been preached at last in Ireland."

That night they drew near the shore and they made such music that the saint whose bell they had heard came down and asked them what manner of creatures they were. And Finoola told him they were the Children of

Lir who were under an enchantment that would last until the worship of the true God was made known in Ireland. Thereupon the saint told them that he was Macovogue and that he had visited all the lakes and bays of Ireland in search of them. And he took the swans to the cell he had built and gave them again the delight of human companionship. And Saint Macovogue had chains of silver made and one chain he put between Finoola and Ae and the other chain between Fiachra and Conn and the swans were glad to be joined together in that way.

There was a king of Connacht at the time and his name was Lairgnen. His queen heard of the swans who spoke as human beings and who made wonderful music and she sent to the saint asking him to let them be brought to the king's mansion. But the saint refused to let the birds go from the place where they were happy. Then the King was angry at his refusal and he went himself to the cell of the saint.

"Is it true," he asked, "that you refused to let these birds go to the Queen's?"

The saint said that it was true indeed.

Then the King grasped at their chains and pulled the swans to him. But when he touched them with his hands their skins of feathers fell away and the three sons of Lir stood as old men, and his daughter as an old woman.

Then said Finoola to the saint, "Baptize us now, for death is near us. Make our graves also and when we are being buried put Conn at my right side and Fiachra at my left side and put Ae before my face."

The saint baptized them and they died. And upon the stone that Saint Macovogue put over their grave, their names and their story are written in Ogham letters.⁵

CHAPTER VI

THE WISDOM OF BRIAN MAGARRY

THE town of Farranboley was like a figure that a child would draw on the pavement with a piece of chalk. Often at the corner of Mill Street Finn O'Donnell sat on his uncle Bartley's cart and watched the market or fair. In the middle of Main Street was the Market House and before it there would be clumps of cattle and calves and drifts of sheep. All down the street there would be strings of carts painted red; and men with sticks in their hands and women with shawls across their heads would be passing up and down. Finn would often have to sit on the cart for hours while his uncle went through the fair transacting his business.

He liked to see the young mountain ponies that the farmers brought into the fair to sell: they would lie on the road as if they were at home on the top of their mountain; their eyes

were large and mild and their manes and tails were long. Across the street was the blacksmith's forge: a horse or a donkey was always standing inside, and dogs were moving about. The blacksmith kept a tame jackdaw in the forge and it would often fly up on the horse's back while the horse was being shod. Michael Staunton, whose father was in prison with Finn's, worked in the forge: it was not long since Michael had left school and Finn used to wonder when he saw him holding with a pair of pincers a red-hot horse-shoe while the bearded blacksmith hammered it. Sometimes when he saw his young friend looking on, Michael would take up a hammer and swing it for pride. Often fine hunting horses would be led out of the forge by grooms, each horse with a rich cloth across his shining skin. As soon as they were on the street the grooms would mount and the horses would gallop away.

There was a shop beside where Finn waited, and behind its big window a tailor was seated on his board; he was always there and he saw everything that happened in the street. Finn never spoke to him, but he thought that the tailor knew how often he had passed that way

late for school. Opposite there was a little house where three shoemakers worked behind a window; they were brothers, but they never spoke to each other and they never looked to see what was happening in the street. One hammered a sole, another stitched a side, and another rubbed the ball on a heel. Finn was sure that these three shoemakers understood what the hens said and knew where the Danes had hidden their treasures.

Before the shoemakers' house there was a standing where a little old woman sold apples, gingerbread and sweets; her standing was an ass-cart shaded over with a stretch of canvas. Nancy Ann was her name and she knit stockings while she waited for the boys and girls. Sometimes in the day his uncle Bartley would give Finn a penny, and then he and his cousins would debate whether they would take something from the jars of sweets, or the piles of apples or the heaps of gingerbread. Finn generally bought two pieces of gingerbread.

Finn would spend a whole day in the town when the market was on Saturday, a day when there was no school. After the market he would stay with his cousins in the house in

Cross Street. At the back there were sheds where his uncle kept the skins he bought—the skins of kids and the hides of cattle—and these sheds were good for playing hide-and-seek around. Finn was rather afraid of being in one of the sheds. A closed box was there and ferrets were kept in it. Finn disliked these little beasts that were always running up and down in their darkness. Sometimes his uncle would take one out of the box and hold it in his hand. The ferrets had lean little bodies with sharp noses, and whether in the box or out of it they were always sniffing. His uncle used them for hunting rabbits: he would put a net at one end of a burrow and let a ferret in at the other end. The poor rabbits, fearful of the dreadful lean ferret would come into the net.

A stream ran past the back-garden; the children had made stepping stones across it and they would go over them and round to the little house where old Brian Magarry sat making besoms⁶ out of the heather he had pulled in the bog or weaving baskets out of the willows he had cut by the river. When the children entered they got the smell of peeled willow rods. Heather was in heaps in one corner of the little

kitchen and finished besoms were in another corner. Against the walls there were bundles of willow rods. The house was full of crickets; they chirruped even from the thatch of the roof.

Finn often met Brian Magarry in the bog. When he saw the white ass standing patiently on the pass with panniers across its back he knew that the old man was somewhere in the unworked bog. Then he would run past where the men were working and soon he would have only the heather around him and the big clouds above his head. When he found Brian the two would sit together on a little clearing, with the hum of bees around them. Brian spent all his day alone, pulling heather in the bog, cutting willows and making baskets and besoms outside his house. The old man pulled the long fibres of heather and twisted them together, making the besom that one held by the strong stalks and swept with the soft tops; Finn had worn out many a one sweeping the kitchen floor and tidying the ashes on the hearth.

When Finn and Brian Magarry sat together they had much to talk about. Where the bogs are now, there were once great forests, Brian

told the boy. There are no forests in Ireland now, but forest on top of forest is buried where the bogs are. Curious things were found in the bogs—the horns of a great deer, the iron helmet of some fighting man, the sword of a king or perhaps a collar of gold. Finn asked Brian Magarry did he ever hear that the Danes' treasures were hidden in the bogs? Brian told him that he would rather find out the secret of making the Heather Ale than find out where the Danes had hidden their treasures. It was the Danes, too, that had that secret. Out of the blossoms of the heather they could make the sweetest ale that ever was drunk. But the Danes were put out of the country and no one in Ireland knew the secret of making the good ale out of the heather.

They often had a long discussion as to how the eels came into the bog-holes. The men cutting peat made holes in the bog; the holes became filled with water and then after a while there would be eels in them. How did the eels cross from one hole to another when no water ran between? Brian Magarry thought they crawled across the ground like snakes. How long would it take the hairs pulled out of a

horse's tail to turn into eels? Finn had pulled such hairs and had put them into water. Brian Magarry thought they would become little eels in a fortnight.

Brian Magarry, whether in the bog or on the road, remained so quiet that the birds went into their nests while he stood by. He showed Finn the lark's nest on the ground with its four brown eggs, and the hedge-sparrow's in which the eggs were blue and beautiful, and the wren's nest set in a mossy bank, a roofed-in habitation of moss full of down and tiny birds. It was not difficult to find the blackbird's, hardly concealed in the thornbush or the ivy, or the thrush's, on which the bird sat with her speckled breast showing above the brim. None of the nests which Brian showed him did Finn show to any other boy, nor did he take even an egg out of them, for Brian told him so much about the birds that he had it not in his heart to make any trouble for them.

CHAPTER VII

SPRING AND SUMMER IN IRELAND

THE children going to school said to each other, "To-morrow is Saint Bridget's Day and to-night is Saint Bridget's Eve."

That was on the first of February, at the very beginning of spring. Finn, when he came home from school was sent by his grandmother to cut rushes, and when he had made a bundle he left them in the shed. He went into the house then and he saw that a little feast was being prepared in the room where the sacred pictures were. A white cloth had been put on the table and lighted candles were placed on it. A girl from the village had come to help his grandmother and she was minding the cake that was baking at the fire.

The four of them—his grandfather and grandmother, the girl and Finn—sat down to supper in the room, and they had with their milk and tea, eggs and cake and honey. Then

when the table was cleared they all knelt down and his grandfather, in Irish, offered up a long prayer in which thanks were given to Saint Bridget, who, under God, had kept the family under protection for the year that was past. Then another long prayer was offered up asking that Saint Bridget should remember them in the year that was coming and protect them against all evils that threatened soul and body. In this prayer everything inside the house and outside of it was placed under the protection of Saint Bridget—the cows and the horse, the sheep and the pigs—the dogs even. Finn remembered the lone pigeon that kept indoors, hopping around the house, and the lamb that his grandfather had promised him, and he asked Saint Bridget to protect them especially.

Then, while the rest were still kneeling, the girl who was servant for the evening got up off her knees and went outside. Last year, Finn remembered, it was his mother who went outside; both she and the girl from the village had Bridget for their name. A knock came to the door. "Who is there?" asked the grandfather in Irish, and the person outside answered also in Irish, "It is Bridget." The grand-

father said "Welcome to you," and the person outside responded, "Rise off your knees, open the door and let poor Bridget in." Then the grandfather, the grandmother and little Finn answered, "Come inside and welcome, welcome a hundred times." The girl came in, carrying on her shoulder the rushes Finn had cut and placed in the shed—the "luachair Brighde" or Bridget's rushes. They were left on the table. Then the grandfather took up some of the rushes and wove them into a cross, and the others then took up the rushes and wove them into other crosses. When about a dozen had been made the grandfather took them and laid them by until the next day, in the chest. Early next morning he went to mass and brought back some water that had been blessed in the chapel. With this water the crosses were sprinkled and they were hung from the rafters, on the walls and over the doors and beds. That was on the first of February. The next day the cow had a little calf and Finn was glad to think that the feeble little thing had Saint Bridget's protection.

On the first day of the next month the rooks began to build in the big elm trees that were

along the road to Farranboley, and that was the surest sign of all that spring was far advanced. Now, when he went along the road or through the field, he heard the cries of the lambs on the hills. When he went to the well he could see that the young kids had become so venturesome that they leapt up on the ditches and stood on the stone walls. There were two kids with the goats at home: Finn used to carry them in his arms but now they were so active that they bounded away from him.

April came, and the young calves were brought into the field. Then, on the last day of that month, Finn went with the other children to gather the May Eve flowers. They found primroses in the ditches and plucked cowslips in the open field, gathered buttercups and daisies and broke the yellow-blossomed branches off the prickly furze. In the evening the bands of children came back to the cottages and the women took the flowers from them and placed them in bowls and jugs on the dresser. Finn's grandmother took the primroses and left them on the window-sill outside and he knew they were put there that the Fairies might know the house was friendly to them. The

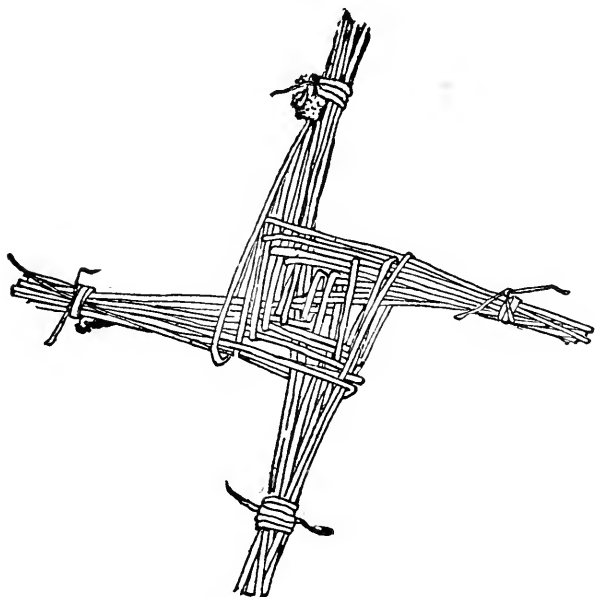
Fairies were supposed to be abroad on May Eve and so the children did not venture out again.

On May Day his grandfather took Finn out and showed him the beauty of the day. He showed him the lovely light on field and bog and hill and the furze with yellow blossoms against the black stalks that remained from last year's burning. The old horses that eat grass on the side of the mountain had got back spirit and bravery, his grandfather told Finn. Then he repeated a poem that had been made by Finn MacCoul about May Day. In the old days, before a youth entered the Fianna, that companionship of heroes, he had to "prove his poetry," that is, he had to show that he, too, could make a poem. Finn MacCoul, before he entered the Fianna, over which he was afterwards Captain, made this poem upon May Day:

Mayday! Delightful time! How beautiful the colour!

The blackbirds sing a full lay, the cuckoo sings in constant strains, how welcome is the noble
Brilliancy of the season. On the margin of the
branchy wood

The Summer's swallows skim the stream, the swift
horses seek the pool,
The heath spreads out its long hair, the fair weak bog-
down grows,
The sea is lulled to rest, flowers cover the earth.



St. Brigid's Cross

CHAPTER VIII

THE GOSSOON

FINN O'DONNELL thought he would be happy as a king from the day he put a boy's suit upon him. You must know that in that part of the country the boys wore petticoats until they were eight or nine years of age. As long as they were in the garb they were called "malrach," but when they got into coats and trousers they were "gossoons" or boys. Finn O'Donnell longed to be a gossoon and he used to think what a fine fellow he would be when he had on the suit that was often in his fancy—a pair of trousers of brown corduroy with brass buttons at the knees, a coat that would show that it had been bought in a shop, and a cap to wear going to school. The day his cousin Michael put on such a suit Finn said to his grandfather, "Isn't it well for Michael! He's a gossoon now."

The next time he was writing to Finn's

mother his grandfather added this to the letter :

“My dear daughter—Finn has grown big and he wants to wear gossoon’s clothes. We would buy him a suit, only we think it should be his mother that would put the first boy’s suit upon him. If it was you sent him the clothes from America Finn would be the more proud to wear them.”

When Finn’s mother wrote back, she said she had bought him a boy’s suit and that Mary Gartland would bring it when she was going home in July.

You may be sure that Finn was excited by the news. When would July be?—he asked his grandfather. How many Sundays more would it be,—he asked his grandmother,—until Mary Gartland would be home with the suit? On the day the letter came his grandmother was putting a hatching hen upon a clutch of eggs. When the chickens were hatched out of the eggs, and a while after that, she told him it would be July.

Finn often watched where the hen was hatching. He would wait until she got off her nest and look at the eggs. But he saw no sign of change on them. At last there were marks

where they were chipped by the birds within. Finn got up early next morning and came to the nest. Shells were laid outside it. He pushed his hands under the hen and found little chickens alive beneath her wings. But still it was a week and three days until Mary Gartland would be home.

There were many young women back from America, and Finn could recognize them by their hats. When he saw one on the road he would wait for her to come up to him or he would run on to catch up to her, expecting that she would speak to him, telling him that she was Mary Gartland and that the suit sent him was at her house.

The next Sunday at the chapel he saw another girl back from America. This time he was sure it was Mary Gartland.

"Grandmother," he said, "there's Mary Gartland."

But he spoke at a very solemn part of the mass and his grandmother bade him kneel down and not let his mind be distracted.

When they were seated again Finn said, "Isn't that Mary Gartland, grandmother?" It was she, sure enough. She waited outside the

chapel to give her messages from Finn's mother.

"And," said she, "I have a suit in my trunk for a little boy. I presume this is the little boy."

That evening Finn went over to Gartlands'. Mary was out to see the neighbours and the boy had to wait—he was very impatient—until she came in. The suit was taken out of the trunk and given him. When Finn got outside the door with the parcel under his arm he ran and ran and ran. He thought he should never reach his grandfather's.

"You can put the suit on you in the morning, Finn," his grandfather said.

But Finn had not run the whole way to sit down now, to go to bed, and to sleep, with the parcel unopened.

"I want to put on my suit," he whispered to his grandmother.

"And we'll let you put it on tonight," she whispered.

She had spun wool and knitted high worsted stockings and had made a linen shirt for him against the time he should get his boy's clothes. Now she took the suit and the shirt and stock-

ings into the room and dressed Finn in his first boy's suit.

He felt so delighted that he could not stay within the house. So he slipped out and ran down to the field where the men and boys were raking the hay. He thought they might fail to give enough notice and as he ran over to them he shouted, "A ghost, a ghost, a ghost." And then he shouted out, "Do you see a gossoon?" But they only said, "It's little Finn O'Donnell." Then one of the men cried, "By the Mortal! Finn O'Donnell is a gossoon now." One of the boys said, "You're a gossoon now, Finn, and you'll have to rake the hay for us."

Finn took up the rake and began to work vigorously. But when he saw they had ceased to be excited about his suit he laid down the rake and slipped away. Coming near the house he caught up with the gander that was leading the young geese on their march home. In his delight and excitement Finn went to drive the geese. Thereupon the gander raced at him, threw him down, nipped his legs and beat him with his wings, and then marched off with his head held high; the whole band of admiring geese followed him. Finn went into

the house very quietly. He never told how ignominiously he had been beaten on the evening he became a gossoon.

CHAPTER IX

FINN'S JOURNEY

IT was while he was in a half-dream that Finn first heard his journey mentioned.

"Now that he has the clothes of a boy," said his grandfather, "he might be let go."

"It's a far journey for a boy like Finn," said his grandmother, "but what you say is true—he might as well go now as at any other time. But I wouldn't hear of him going to Dublin in a train at all. I think no one could be safe in a train."

"Well, let Bartley take him in the cart and travel on the roads all the way to Dublin," said his grandfather. "Bartley could do that journey now, for the goods train isn't running and he might as well go up to Dublin."

Finn tried to keep awake to hear the rest of the arrangement, but his grandfather and grandmother were sitting at the kitchen fire while he was in bed in the room; their voices became lower and lower; Finn wet his eyes to

prevent their closing, but in spite of his doing that he fell asleep.

Next day, when he considered the conversation, he knew what journey his grandfather and grandmother were speaking about. His mother's aunt who lived near Dublin had often written to his grandfather asking that Finn be let stay with her for a while. They always wrote back that Finn was too young to go on such a far journey. And now his grandfather and grandmother were actually letting him go! Finn ran along the road to Farranboley telling himself about the wonders and delights of Dublin. The houses there were bigger and more full of room than any houses he ever saw. And a boy need never carry water to these houses, for water came to them in some wonderful way. His grand-aunt had a shop and he knew that he would be always able to get apples and ginger-cakes and lucky-bags that had always some wonderful present. He would always wear new clothes. Very likely his aunt kept a little pony. Finn saw himself riding majestically and watched admiringly by a row of boys that he knew who were suddenly transported to Dublin.

He found his cousins Michael and Rose in the town and he told them that he was going to Dublin. Michael made him promise to send him a young greyhound. Then he told Rose he would bring her back a big top that made music as it spun. The three children then went to see John Staunton who was in the empty forge. When they told him of the great event John said that he had often been in Dublin and that he was going up the next week to buy iron. But John Staunton could give no account of the occasions on which he had been in Dublin. He told Finn that if a little boy like him (he called him a "malrach" although Finn had on gossoon's clothes) went out on the street he would be lost and would never be able to find again the house he was staying at. If a policeman met him, then he would arrest him and send him to a place where he would have to keep at school all his life. Then John Staunton suddenly blew up the blacksmith's fire and told the children they would have to leave the forge as he had to get ready to shoe a race-horse.

Finn went home then. On the road he told himself that if ever he got lost on a Dublin

street he would walk straight on as if he knew his way perfectly. It could not be but that he would come back to his grand-aunt's some time in the day.

At home they told him nothing about the journey before him, but he saw that his grandmother was making him shirts and knitting him stockings. Then a letter came from his grand-aunt in reply to one his grandfather had sent her. That evening his grandfather took Finn on his knees and told him that he was being sent to his grand-aunt's house near Dublin. The next evening they would go to his uncle Bartley's and on the following morning he would go in his uncle's cart.

The next day his shirts and his stockings were put in one basket, and eggs and butter and honey as a present for his grand-aunt were put in another. His grandmother put a little medal round his neck and kissed him and cried over him. Then his grandfather took him by the hand, and, each carrying a basket, they went along the road to Farranboley. Finn was thinking of the hairs out of the horse's tail that he had put in a little pond. He would not see them turn into eels. He decided to

tell Michael about them and ask him to look at them and then give his grandfather a message that could be sent in a letter.

That evening, in the back-garden near the little stream, the children played many games together. Michael instructed them in a new game that was called "Ghost in the Garden." One of the children put some cloth across his head and sat in a place apart. The others drew near saying, "Ghost in the Garden on a very bright night." Suddenly the figure would go towards them with hands outstretched. Finn had a feeling of dread as he ran with the others round the bushes. But it was a grand game and he should be the first to show it to the children in Dublin.

They had to go in before dark, for Finn would have to make an early start. His grandfather talked to him before he was taken up to bed. He did not sleep for a long time, for his mind was on the wonderful journey that was before him.

CHAPTER X

THE BOY ON THE ROAD

EARLY in the morning his grandfather wakened him, and Finn and the old man ate their breakfast while the horse was rattling his harness on the street outside. They ate by candlelight, for it was still wonderfully early. The stars were bright in the sky and the dogs were barking, mistrustful of the honesty of the light.

Finn bade his grandfather good-bye and mounted the cart beside his uncle. They passed the last house in the street and went by fields where the corncrakes were still keeping up their revels. A cart creaked before them, but the figures upon it were still indistinct. Candles were burning in cottages where men were making ready for the far-away fair. Suddenly a bird gave a frightened squawk. There was silence again and then another bird went over a few notes. In a while all the

birds were singing together—blackbirds, thrushes, robins, linnets and finches—as though they were all in the one nest with their heads held up and their dewy wings spread out.

For an hour, as the cart went on, they heard the chorus of the birds. The light grew wider, the wind lost the sullenness of the night and the dogs became satisfied of the honesty of the day. Then the geese began to cackle. The song-birds refused to be drawn into competition and the chorus ceased.

Then the birds of no song were seen and heard. The rooks cawed as they flew down from the trees, the pigeons cooed, the swallows twittered as they skimmed the grass by the side of the roadway, and the magpie chucked out her queer notes as she hopped on before the cart. And now they fell in with vehicles on their way to the fair—crates filled with calves or with lambs—and Finn's uncle exchanged with the men many observations on prices current, that is to say, on the present cost of food and clothes. It was about eight in the morning when they came into the town. Here Bartley was to receive the sacks of wool they

were to carry to Dublin. Finn remembered the little speckled fish he got with his breakfast in this place. Before the market began they were on the road again.

And now Finn had a comfortable sack of wool at his back. They passed children going to school, some of them comparing figures in an exercise book and others hearing each other's lessons. Finn longed to tell them that for him there was no school—that for day after day, giving no heed to lessons, he would travel along the road to Dublin. For long he had the exultation of this thought and with the eyes of a truant he watched the scores of rabbits that ventured on the road and that sat down on their haunches and waited until the cart came near. He saw a hare running a race with itself across a field. It sat down to watch the travellers at its ease and when Finn, standing up in the cart, started it by cracking Bartley's whip, it ran back on its tracks, more and more delighted with its own speed.

And now it was afternoon and the trees were making long shadows across the road. There was green on each side—high green hedges and deep green grass. On each side

there was a row of beech trees and their little leaves were so full of sunlight that it was a delight to watch their play. Past where the travellers met a foolish boy with a flock of black-faced lambs that baaed around him, they came upon a thick-set man with a black beard of a fashion that Finn had never seen before. He had a pack on his back and as they passed him he said to Bartley, "Good-morning, sar."

Bartley told Finn that the man was a Jew.

Was he a Jew like those mentioned in the story of Our Lord?

Bartley said he was.

The cart was pulled up, and while the horse bit at the hedges Finn watched the sallow-faced, black-bearded man come on.

Was he the man whom his grandfather had spoken about—the wandering Jew who had denied Our Lord a place to rest and who now had to walk all the roads of the world?

The man placed his pack on the ditch and opened it. He showed them pictures with golden frames—pictures of Angels with blue and red garments, of the Queen of the Angels with a golden crown upon her head and of Daniel O'Connell with his hand laid upon his

breast. Bartley wouldn't buy any of the pictures. He purchased a red handkerchief for himself and a little pen-knife for Finn. The cart went on again and Finn watched the Jew labouring along the road like one who had come a long journey and was unused to travelling a-foot.

Later in the afternoon they met the man with the Peep-Show. He had a high stick in his hand and he carried on his back a box covered with a black cloth. He was a big man with a round, boneless face, dark glasses across his eyes and a black cap drawn over a big, closely-cropped head. When the cart came alongside him Bartley drew up and invited the Peep-Show man to take a lift.

"I am obliged to you," the man said, using many words which Finn now heard for the first time, "I am obliged for your offer. But I imagine your journey is along the main road while I must betake myself to the bye-ways. So, friend, I shall not incommode you by taking a seat on your vehicle. But, may I ask, do you travel far?"

"We are going to Dublin in the latter end," said Bartley.

"I once used to make my journey as far as the capital," the Peep-Show man said, "but I have not been in Dublin for a considerable term of years. I fear the young people of the city are above regarding my Peep-Show. I fear it."

"So you're the Peep-Show man," said Bartley. "It's twenty years since I took my peep into your box. It was at the fair of Ballina I met you, if you'll remember."

"Undoubtedly," said the Peep-Show man, "undoubtedly, friend, you saw me at the fair of Ballina. And you might have seen me at many another fair for the matter of that—at many another fair. I was as famed as Daniel O'Connell. But the Devil began to make me see strange things in my Peep-Show, and since then I have been in a place of rest. If you hear anyone speak of Nab the Peep-Show man, tell them, friend, that Nab was away."

"I suppose you have the same sights in the box now as you had then?"

"Undoubtedly, friend. Nothing is changed, I assure you. Absolutely the same objects."

"I saw Napoleon crossing the Alps."

"Undoubtedly, friend, you saw Napoleon

crossing the Alps. But let me tell you, friend, that twenty years ago you were incapable of understanding that great historic scene—absolutely incapable of understanding it. But there are two other objects in my box that would have been more in conformity with your youthful understanding—Lima, the capital of Peru which stands fifteen thousand feet above the sea-level, and also the “Meeting between Valentine and Orson, the Sons of the Emperor of Greece.”

“Would you like to look into the Peep-Show?” said Bartley to Finn.

“I would,” said Finn.

Nab, the Peep-Show man, left his box on a mile-stone.

“Let him see the “Meeting of Valentine and Orson,” said Bartley. “I often heard my father talk of them two.”

“Undoubtedly they are two very celebrated characters in ancient history,” said the Peep-Show man, “and I am astonished to find that their story is so little known to the people nowadays. I understand they were sons to the Emperor of Greece and one of them,—Orson, if I remember aright,—was stolen away as a

child and reared most rudely in the depths of a forest. The other, I understand, was reared in a way befitting his rank and station. Orson wore the skins of beasts and was hardly acquainted with the sounds of human language. One day when Valentine was hunting in the forest his brother appeared before him, muttering like a bear, with a club in his hands and most awful to behold. That is the meeting of Valentine and Orson. For the sum of two pence the boy can gaze upon this celebrated object.

Finn dismounted and came to the Peep-Show with beating heart.

"Direct your eye to this orifice," said Nab. Finn looked into the darkness. Like a child he thought of what he was going to see, not as something that was there already, but as something that would be created like a star for him.

"What do you see?" asked the Peep-Show man.

"A man with a big stick in his hand," said Finn.

"That is his club and the man who bears it is Orson."

The Peep-Show man shook the box. "What do you see now?" he asked.

"The man with the club is gone."

"And what do you see now?"

"A man on a horse."

"Dear me, dear me, dear me! The object you see now is Napoleon crossing the Alps."

Finn did not take his eye off the object.

"Undoubtedly," said the Peep-Show man, "undoubtedly Valentine is lost. My box was five years in their office. All the time I was composing my mind the Peep-Show lay with their rubbish. Did I not see a spider spinning his web across this orifice? Undoubtedly Valentine is lost. I give you back one of the pennies."

The Peep-Show man put the box on his back and started off down a bye-road.

And now the beech-trees were no longer each side of them, for the country had opened into the black spaces of the bog. Upon this road they met carts and people. Drays coming from some town, piled with sacks of flour, crossed crates of black turf. Such wide bogs Finn never had seen before. The bog-cotton grew in beds like white-headed flowers and

straggled out to the road. The wood dug out of the depths of the bog, dried in the sunlight, looked like heaps of bones. And all across the black surface were piles of black turf. Finn rested his back against the comfortable wool-sack and while his uncle was singing ballads, "On a Monday Morning early, as my wandering steps did lead me," and "The gown she wore was stained with gore," Finn fell asleep.

It was cold when he wakened and the white mists were rising from the bog. He was thankful when his uncle bought him a bag of ginger-cakes in a wayside shop. They went on again and the whiteness of their wings was noticeable as the geese trudged home. The cows mooed anxiously and Finn thought how glad they would be of the shelter of the byre. They passed through a little village where the children were playing, and again, they were on the open road.

And now the woods grew black and Finn saw the owls sweeping out like great white moths. Lighted candles made wayside houses look very comfortable. On and on they went. Then they halted before a forge where men

were standing around a standing horse. Bartley called to someone inside. The smith came out and welcomed him, calling Bartley "Honest man," and when Bartley asked might they stay with him for the night the smith said, "To be sure," and "welcome."

The smith's sons took charge of Finn and the smith's wife gave him a supper of porridge and tea. At night he told the boys of Nab, the Peep-show man. And the boys told Finn too about a circus that had been in a field near the forge. Finn slept with the boys in a loft and he was awakened by the first light of the morning. Before the ring of iron on iron was heard in the forge Bartley and he had started on the road again.

CHAPTER XI

FINN MEETS TIM ROGAN

THIS is the way Finn saw Tim Rogan for the first time.

They were passing the gate of a big building that Bartley said was the workhouse, and a collection of tramps, men and women, were passing through it. They had been given a night's shelter and had done a morning's work in return. There was a boy with the tramps. He hurried from the group and went alongside the cart. Finn saw that the boy carried a pigeon on his shoulder. He was older than Finn, being twelve or thirteen years of age, and had red hair and a freckled face and ran on in his bare feet. Bartley said that the pigeon on the boy's shoulder was a nun-pigeon, and Finn saw that it had a remarkable hood on its head.

Well, the boy went beside the cart and he looked very disappointed when they drew up

alongside of Flannigan's shop. The horse was unharnessed and left in the yard and Bartley and Finn took their breakfast. Two hours later they were on the road again. A few miles outside the town they heard the music of a tin-whistle. It was being played by somebody sitting in a ditch. When they came alongside of the player Finn saw that he was the red-headed boy with the nun-pigeon. He put himself before the horse and continued playing with great energy. Then, holding the tin-whistle in his hand he ran by the cart, saying to Bartley:

"Eh, mister, is this the road to Dublin?"

Bartley told him it was but that it would take him a long time to get to the city.

Then he said with a whine in his voice, "I'm a poor lone boy going the roads of Ireland and I'm travelling hungry."

Bartley told him he would give him a lift as far as the next town, and with a grin of great triumph the boy mounted the cart, the pigeon still keeping on his shoulder.

He told Bartley that his name was Tim Rogan and that his father was a travelling tumbler. They would put down a little carpet

on the street of a town and then Tim would play on the tin-whistle to bring a crowd. His father would tumble then for the children and in this way they got coppers. But before his father took to strolling he was a great man. He used to swing off trapezes in Beatty's Show and his name used to be on the placards as the Great Caucasian Acrobat. There used to be pictures, too, of his father flying through the air. But his father became very strange and Mr. Beatty said that it was that he lost his nerve and couldn't act on the trapezes any more. Then he started as a travelling tumbler with Tim playing the tin-whistle for him. His father became more and more queer and he told Tim not to be following him. He beat him with a belt for going after him one day. Then, a couple of nights ago when they were sleeping in a shed his father got up in the middle of the night and went away. Tim hadn't seen him since. Then he followed some tramps and went with them into the workhouse last night.

Finn wanted to know where he had got the pigeon.

It was his own pigeon, Tim Rogan said. He

was nearly forgetting it the day they left the show. But he went back from the road and the pigeon flew down off Beatty's van and lit on his shoulder. He had stayed there ever since.

Where did he get the tin-whistle, Bartley asked.

Tim said it was a very expensive sort of tin-whistle. It was called a variegated tin-whistle and you paid eight-pence for it. It was a great sort of a tin-whistle. There was great sound in it. Saying this Tim Rogan put the tin-whistle to his mouth and played a march. The horse pricked up its ears and went forward with more spirit. Bartley, who wasn't in his best spirits that morning, began to get into a better humour. Tim played one tune after another. They found themselves getting past dull bits of country—fields beside an empty road where there were only black bullocks looking across gates, and other fields, more empty still, where herons rose from beside pools of water and flew lazily away. They came into a village and Bartley got a dinner for Tim. He ate quickly and slipped away while Finn and Bartley were waiting for tea. But

when they were on the road again and some miles outside the town they heard the music of the tin-whistle and came upon Tim playing for some men who were working in the bog. He put up the tin-whistle and begged for a lift for another bit of the road. He played on at the time when the light is leaving the sky and when it gets more lonesome on the road. Then when he put the tin-whistle in his pocket he told Bartley that he was going to Dublin to find his grandmother. If he had anyone friendly to him at all, he said, he could get a job after a while. He should like to drive a horse and van.

That night they came into the town of Ballymore. They drew up at Mrs. Foley's. Tim wanted to slip off, but Bartley said he would get him a supper and a place to sleep for the night. Mrs. Foley gave him a bed beside Jimmy, the servant boy. But they found out next morning that Tim never slept in the bed at all. He went out in the middle of the night and stayed in the stable with the horse.

CHAPTER XII

THE CIRCUS

NEXT day, before they started, Bartley discovered that the tire, or, as he called it, the shoeing, was loose on the wheel of the cart. So the cart was left at the wheelwright's and the horse was brought to the forge to have new nails put in his shoes. Tim Rogan went with Bartley, and Finn stayed in Mrs. Foley's house.

Now, while he was in the room above, looking out of the window, he saw a very strange sight. Behold, there was a black man walking down the street. He had rings in his ears, and Finn O'Donnell was sure he was a black king. Finn had only seen black men in a picture on the wall of the school and they were described there as kings. The black man walked into Mrs. Foley's shop. Immediately Finn opened the room-door and ran down. There was the black man with a red handker-

chief around his neck and big rings in his ears standing in the middle of the shop while Mrs. Foley weighed out two stone of flour for him. The black man left the money on the counter and put the bag on his back. Then he just walked down the street as simply as a countryman.

"That man's from the circus, Finn," said Mrs. Foley.

Then Tim Rogan came in through the back-door. "There's a circus in the town," said he, "the procession is going out on the street and your uncle says we may go to the performance. He has given us the money to go, too."

Just then Finn heard such music as he had never heard before—the thumping music of drums and cymbals. Tim and he ran to the door and saw the circus-procession approaching. Marching to the sound of music were high white horses with wonderfully-dressed riders upon them. And then there came a chariot drawn by four horses, the chariot itself glittering with gold, with banners flying from it and covered with wonderful pictures. The four men who made the music were within it. Finn's eyes followed the wonderful chariot and

Tim Rogan had to draw his attention to another marvel.

"Look, Finn," he said, "look at the elephant!"

Oh, there was the elephant, with trunk and all as was shown in the picture on the wall of the school. He tramped down the street, swinging his trunk from side to side or lifting an orange-peel from the street and holding it up. An elephant! Why, there might be lions and tigers coming after that! But behind came a herd of little piebald ponies, all with bells on their harness. Then came a beautiful young lady riding on a cream-colored pony. Her pony too had bells on its harness and the young lady held the reins loose in her hands. The whole procession had passed, but Finn watched the chariot with its banners until it turned down the street.

Tim was pulling his sleeve. "Come down to the fair-green," he said, "we'll wait there till the procession comes back."

They ran the whole way. Such a lot of horses! All were not in the procession. There were more high white horses! And look at all the little ponies that were only the

size of calves! And there were more piebald horses. The big tent for the circus was already erected. On top of it a green flag was flying and over the entrance was written, "MacConglinne's Great Gaelic Circus."

There was a little tent over which was written, "Birds and Beasts, Admission One Penny." The boys paid their pennies to a black man and went in. Tim was able to tell Finn about the birds and beasts that were in the cages. The big bird that looked so grave and that was turning head over heels on its perch was a cockatoo. The green bird that looked so sleepy was a parrot. It only pretended to be sleepy. The parrot could talk and when the black man came in the parrot would tell him everything one did or said. That terrible-looking bird was an eagle! He was king over all the birds, and if he got out of that cage—Tim wouldn't like to say what he would do to the inhabitants of Ballymore. Finn thought that the eagle certainly looked a revengeful sort of bird.

Then something said, "Hillo," and when the boys looked down they saw a magpie in a cage. He said "hillo" again and cocked an eye at them

but still kept very sulky. And beside the magpies there was a cage with white rabbits munching cabbage-leaves. And what were the little animals running about beside the rabbits? They were guinea-pigs, Tim said. They surely looked like pigs as they ate out of their trough, with their ears and skins moving. Finn thought it would be grand to have a guinea-pig. What a delight it would be to show it to Michael!

The thumping music of the drums and cymbals was heard again. The procession had returned. The musicians came down from their glittering chariot; the elephant marched on as if he knew his own way, the riders guided the steeds they had been upon, the little ponies that had been away mingled with the little ponies that remained on the fair-green; the black man stood by the stirrup of the beautiful young lady while she dismounted. The circus would begin in a while.

Finn and Tim were the first to seat themselves on the high benches. While they waited for the show to begin Tim confided to Finn that he knew all about circuses. His father, before he had become a travelling tumbler was one of

the acrobats in Beatty's Show. The music began, loud and exciting, and Tim beat time to it. Then the clown entered the ring. He had a white conical hat on the side of his head and as he walked round the ring he flourished his whip and sang:

Crack, crack, crack goes my whip! I'll whistle and
I'll sing

As I sit upon my wagon, I'm as happy as a King.
My horse is always willing, and for me, I'm never sad,
There's none that leads a more jolly life than Jimmy,
the Carter's lad.

"That whip's not his. It's the ring-master's. You'll see he'll get into trouble for having it," said Tim to Finn.

Just then the ring-master ran into the circus. He followed up the clown and the two became engaged in a heated discussion:

The Ring-master:—Where did you get that whip, sir?

The Clown:—I got it three days ago, sir.

The Ring-master:—I lost it three days ago, sir.

The Clown:—You lost a whip three days ago, sir, but that doesn't prove, sir, that this is your whip, sir.

The Ring-master:—Leave that whip on the ground, sir.

The Clown:—I shan't leave my whip on the ground, sir.

The ring-master turned round and emitted a long whistle. A horse galloped into the tent, seized the whip in his teeth and pulled it out of the clown's hand.

The Ring-master:—Now you see the whip is mine, sir.

The Clown:—I see, sir, that your horse is well trained, sir, to snatch whips out of people's hands, sir.

The clown, having lost his whip threw back-somersaults around the ring. Wonderful feats followed the clown's performance. Men and women stood on each other's shoulders and reached up to swings that were high up in the air. Then they began to throw themselves from one swing to another. Finn gazed with wonder at this performance. Then it was announced that a young woman, in her bare feet, would climb a ladder of swords. The black man put the swords into their places on the ladder. With a sweep of the blade he cut a

paper thrown into the air before he put it into the rung. Then the lady put her bare feet to the naked edges and climbed to the top of the ladder. Finn kept wondering how he could tell Bartley and his grandfather and Michael of such marvels.

"They can do anything," said Finn.

"I doubt if they'll be able to do what they have given out for the next turn," said Tim with a professional air.

"What are they going to do?"

"They said on the placards that a young lady is going to walk across a looking-glass like a fly with her head down," said Tim.

"Is it with her head down to the ground," said Finn.

"So they say," said Tim, "but I doubt if we'll see them doing it. They say things on the placards to bring in the country gawks."

But in spite of Tim's skepticism, what appeared to be a large mirror was suspended about twenty feet above the ground with its reflector turned down. The young lady of the procession mounted a ladder and then swung herself round till she put her feet resting on the face of the mirror. Finn clutched Tim.

"Never fear, she won't fall," said Tim, "she has sticky things on her feet."

Very slowly, putting one foot down after raising the other, the lady crossed the mirror, her head turned towards the ground. When she had finished, the clown started to applaud her and then the whole circus applauded her. She stood beside the ring-master and bowed to all.

Then the clown brought out a donkey and placed him in the middle of the ring.

"This," said the ring-master, "is Jerusalem, the costermonger's donkey. The most remarkable thing about him is his kicking accomplishments. The proprietors of the Circus offer a prize of one pound to the boy who will ride him around the ring three times."

A prize of a pound! Finn thought that if he won that prize he would be able to buy one of the little ponies that he had seen on the fair-green. He felt himself tingling all over at the thought of descending into the ring. Then he saw a boy jumping down from the benches and running across the ring.

"Will you ride, sir? Very well, sir, I hope you'll have a good seat, sir," said the clown.

The boy clambered up on its back and the donkey started off. Suddenly it put its head down and kicked. The boy was glad to slip off and everybody laughed at him.

"Thank *you*, sir," said the clown. He brought the donkey into the centre of the ring and said, "Will any other young gentleman oblige the circus by riding this donkey round the ring three times?"

Again Finn's heart went thumping. Suppose he did go into the ring and suppose he did ride the donkey round the ring three times? Then he would have his pound, and even if he gave Bartley some of it he would still be able to buy the parrot or a guinea pig at least or a white rabbit. But while he was thinking, Tim slipped down from the bench and ran into the ring.

"Will you ride, sir?" said the clown. "Very well, sir; mount and off with you, sir."

Tim put his hand upon its mane and suddenly jumped on the donkey's back. He did not throw his legs across but sat as if on side-saddle holding the donkey by the mane and tail. It suddenly started off and went round the ring once in a gallop. Then the clown shouted and

the donkey stopped suddenly. But Tim started whistling a loud tune into the donkey's ear. It started off again and half way round the ring stopped, put its head down and kicked as no donkey ever kicked before. But Tim's feet never touched the ground. And now he threw his arm round the donkey's neck and held tightly, whistling into its ear. The donkey finished the second round and then galloped around again for the third time. The whole circus cheered and poor Finn felt very sorry that it was Tim Rogan and not he who had performed the wonderful feat. The ring-master then sent for the black man who came back with a box full of money.

"Hold out your hand, sir," said the clown, and he counted into Tim's hand one pound in big silver pieces. Tim ran across the ring and jumped up the benches beside Finn. "Twenty shillings in my pocket, twenty shillings in my pocket," he kept whispering for a while. The clown was now walking round the ring singing one of his comic songs:

Do you imagine me a comic-looking genius?
Do you consider me a queer-looking fish?

But I go upon my way and never mind you,
You may laugh at me as long as you wish.

Tim and Finn were too excited to wait for the rest of the performance. They slipped under the benches, passed the black man at the flap of the tent and went out on the fair-green.

CHAPTER XIII

KATE MARY ELLEN AND THE FAIRIES

FINN and Tim went out of the circus-field stealthily and when they came to the road they ran for sheer excitement. Would the black man chase them for the money Tim had received. Finn was afraid to look back. They went on more quietly when they came to the street where Mrs. Foley's shop was situated. Bartley had not come back from the wheelwright's, but according to a message he would be with them when the boys had eaten dinner.

Finn and Tim ate so quickly that they had time on their hands. It was best to be away in case the black man came, and with this thought in their heads the boys went towards the cartwright's yard. Tim had become very important in his own estimation. He would go to America, he told Finn, for Ireland did not offer opportunities for a person of his capacity. He

would buy two revolvers and become a miner, and Finn would read about him afterwards in the papers as the great Indian fighter. So he talked as they went on.

They came to the yard and found Bartley with the cart made whole again. As the three walked beside the horse Finn told his uncle of Tim's tremendous exploits and Tim showed the big silver pieces in confirmation of the tale. Bartley was so much impressed by the sight of this money that he took the boys into a shop and gave them a treat of cakes and ginger-beer. He told everybody in the shop about Tim's success.

When they came to Mrs. Foley's they were told that there was a man from the circus waiting to see the boys. Bartley, Tim and Finn all thought it was someone come to take back the money. Tim and Finn expected to see the black man. They went inside and saw a little man frisking about. He wore a long overcoat and the chalk was off his face, but the boys recognized him as the clown from the circus.

"So this is the lad that rode our donkey," said he with a grin. "May your winnings do you every good, for you're a fine young fellow.

I came to ask you would you join our little circus. We'd treat you well and maybe we'd make an acrobat of you."

"I don't want to be an acrobat," said Tim.

"Now that I look at you," said the clown, "I think that you're more fit for our own profession. Come back with me and I'll train you up for a clown. You can play the tin-whistle, I hear. I'll teach you tricks and patter and in a while you'll be in the ring."

"I want to go to Dublin," said Tim.

"Sure we'll bring you to Dublin with our little circus," said the clown.

"Don't be telling lies to the chap," said a beggarman who was standing before the counter. "What would bring you to Dublin? Your old circus wouldn't be looked at there."

"I promise you it will be looked at," said the clown to Tim, "and if you come with us we'll make you a gallant rider on a big white horse."

"If the young fellow will take my advice," said the beggarman, "he'll go on to Dublin with his friends."

"Yes, I'm going to Dublin," said Tim. He ran out to the yard and came back with the pigeon on his shoulder.

"Fare you well," said the clown. "We're for the road too, and if you come across us, remember that we'll give you a ride on the donkey."

He went off then, and Tim got into the cart with Bartley and Finn and they started off again.

It was the afternoon of a very warm day. The hawthorn was gone from the hedges and in its place were the wide blossoms of the elder. The fields in this part of the country were wider than any Finn had seen. No one worked in them and black cattle moved across them. For a long stretch of the road they saw no one but a road-mender sitting beside his heap of stones. They went through three villages, the houses of which were washed with pink instead of with white. When they came on the empty road again the corncrakes were to be heard from the fields. Before night came down they overtook a man who was leading a lame horse. Bartley and he were glad of each other's company and they kept to each other's pace. The man told the travellers that they would be going by the Hill of Tara next day and that they should see the place where so many kings of

Ireland were. He showed the boys a grassy mound covered with trees and told them it was a fort and that the fairies frequented it. He stopped to light his pipe and as he started off again he began:—

“There was a little girl hereabout and her name was Kate Mary Ellen. She was as good a child as ever put a shawl across her head. Her people had only one cow and Kate Mary Ellen used to be minding it along the grassy sides of the road. One Saint Patrick’s day she thought she would pluck herself a bunch of the shamrock that grew inside that fort. The people used to say that the shamrock that grew there had a splash of blood on it and Kate Mary Ellen would fain have a bunch that would be so remarkable. So when the cow got into a good piece of grass, Kate Mary Ellen left her and went up to the fort. She had trouble in getting in, for there were sloe bushes and blackthorn bushes round it like a fence. But she got through at last, and there was clear ground with old twisted thorn trees growing round.

“Kate Mary Ellen plucked a piece of shamrock and looked to see if there was anything

remarkable on it at all. When she looked round again she saw a little fellow looking at her from behind a hawthorn bush. By the size of him and by the shape of his boots she knew he was a fairy man. And behind every hawthorn bush Kate Mary Ellen saw a couple more. She was that flustered that she stood without moving a limb.

“Then one who had sharp eyes and a very high look said to her, ‘Are you an obedient child?’

“‘I am, sir,’ said Kate Mary Ellen.

“‘Then,’ said he, ‘take these shamrocks in your hand and go and stand on the bridge. A coach will be passing and you must contrive to stop it. Inside of it will be a big man, and all you will have to do is to hand him your bunch of shamrocks and say to him, “Daniel O’Connell,” the fairy people of Ireland will not go against you.’ Will you be able to do that?”

“‘I will, sir,’ says Kate Mary Ellen.

“‘Say the words after him,’ said another of the fairies, a middling sharp-looking little fellow.

“‘Daniel O’Connell, the fairies of Ireland won’t go against you,’ says Kate Mary Ellen.

“‘That’s it,’ says the high-looking fairy man, ‘and now let you make your way to the bridge, and I’ll send one of my men to look after your cow till you come back.’”

“Away went Kate Mary Ellen. She got down the slope that goes down from the fort, and then she came racing back. The fairies were all standing consulting together.

“‘I suppose,’ says Kate Mary Ellen, ‘that’s the bridge on the Old Road that I’m to go to?’”

“‘It’s the road that the coaches travel that you’re to go to,’ says the second fairy, very severe.

“‘There’s no bridge upon that road,’ says Kate Mary Ellen.

“‘Go and stand on the bridge and do the Commander’s bidding,’ says the second fairy back to her.

“‘Yes, sir,’ says Kate Mary Ellen, and with that she made off.

“She never stopped running until she was on the Old Road. The grass was growing nigh to the middle of it, for nothing ever travelled it except a goose or an ass. Kate Mary Ellen stationed herself on the bridge, and waited and waited. All she heard going past was an odd

trout that leaped in the stream below. She began to get anxious on account of her cow; there was no sign of a coach high up or low down, and at last she started off running to Martin Murphy's house.

"'Will there be any coach on the Old Road today?' says she, as soon as she came in the door.

"Martin Murphy was sitting at the fire, and he turned round on that.

"'A coach,' says he. 'A coach on the Old Road,' says he again. 'What would there be a coach on the Old Road for? Sure it's thirty years since a car itself went travelling that road.'

"'And will Daniel O'Connell not be coming the way?' says Kate Mary Ellen.

"'Daniel O'Connell,' says Martin Murphy. 'What do they be teaching you at all in school? Don't you know that it's sixty years since Daniel O'Connell was walking the ground of Ireland?'

"Well, at that Kate Mary Ellen made off. Her heart was twisted with concern for the cow. She made for the fort, and got through the blackthorns and sloe bushes. The fairies

were standing there with trailing cloaks on them and little swords in their belts. They were consulting together, and they all looked very anxious.

“‘Well,’ says the second fairy, ‘and what did he say?’

“‘He’s not coming that way at all, and it’s long since a coach went over the road.’

“‘Could it be that we’re late?’ says the Commander.

“‘Not at all,’ says the second of them. ‘But in case he went early we’ll take horse.’

“‘Yes,’ says the Commander, ‘we’ll take horse this minute, and we’ll wait for him at Tara. The little girl will have to come with us, for it is appointed to her to hand the shamrock to the Liberator. Show her how to mount the bramble,’ says he, ‘and let us be off on the minute.’

“They gave Kate Mary Ellen a bramble, and put a dock-leaf on it for a side-saddle; the commander stamped his foot, and they were clear of the fort and were galloping through the air in a moment.

“‘We mustn’t come up to the Hill,’ says the second of the fairies, ‘for the crowds of the

world are sure to be on Tara today. We'll get off at the back of the hill and ride over quietly.'

"The wind that was before them they overtook, and the red wind of March that was behind did not overtake them. They rode on and on, and they were soon at Tara.

"They came down on a little field.

" 'And now,' says the second fairy, 'we'll let on that we're huntsmen and gallop up to them. The crowds of the world are sure to be on the Hill, but we'll keep to the outside of them.'

"With that they galloped through fields and over ditches, and they came up to the Hill of Tara. And all that was before them was a wide grassy place with cattle grazing over it. There was no sign of a person on the Hill at all.

" 'We're late for the meeting,' says one of them.

" 'We're a day late for the meeting,' says another of them.

" 'We're a year late for the meeting,' says a third of them.

" 'Ay, and twenty years late for the meeting,' says a fourth one of them.

“‘You’re sixty years late for the meeting,’ says Kate Mary Ellen, speaking up to them.

“All the fairies shook their heads at the one that was second.

“‘You’re to blame for this,’ says the commander, looking very severe at him.

“The second of the fairies went down on his knees immediately. ‘My lord,’ says he, lifting his hands, ‘don’t blame me. It was only this morning I received notice of the meeting from Clourie Com.’

“The commander looked at them all very severely. ‘It’s no wonder,’ says he, ‘that above ground and below ground affairs are in the state they’re in. Mount horses and make no stop nor stay until we strike hoofs on our own courtyard.’

“They mounted, and if they came at a run they went back at a race. When they struck hoof on the fort the ground opened and they went down. They took a turning to the right and came to a little forge. In they went, Kate Mary Ellen with them. The like of what she saw there never came to her eyes since or before. It wasn’t a face that was looking towards them, but the top of a head that was

as bald and as smooth as a goose's egg. The beard that grew down was all round the fellow like an apron. He was a little old fellow sitting on a stool, and his legs were twisted like the stems of the hawthorn tree. His hands were under his head, and Kate Mary Ellen never saw them. Only the top of his bald head was to be seen.

“ ‘When you took that man into your service did you know what age he was?’ says the commander to the second fairy.

“ ‘I thought I did, my lord,’ says he.

“ ‘Well, whatever age he told you he was, he's a thousand years older than that same,’ says the commander. ‘It's no wonder our time has all gone wrong, and that we're sixty years slow in our reckoning. Start Clourie Com carving his tombstone, and by the time he has that done he'll be ripe for his burial. And as for you, young girl,’ says he, ‘I found you serviceable and agreeable. You'll get your cow in the hollow and you can go home or stay on the road, as it pleases yourself. Bring the bunch of shamrock with you. Dip it in the well of the fort, and it will remain everlasting. And on the Saint Patrick's Day that the cherry

tree in your grandmother's yard is blown down, stand at the cross roads and give the bunch to a young man you'll see riding by. He'll be on his way to Tara, too, and you'll tell him that the fairies of Ireland will not go against him. We missed Dan O'Connell, but we'll not miss him. And,' says he, 'lest it should be said,' says he, 'that those who help the fairies get nothing for their service, the next time you're at the well in the pasture field lift up the flagstone,' says he, 'and you'll find a little pan of gold.'

"Well, my turning is here. Good-night and a safe journey to you all." Thereupon the man with the horse turned up a crooked laneway.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MULDOWNEY TWINS

“**F**INN,” said Bartley, “run after the man with the horse and ask him where will we inquire for lodgings in the village.”

Finn got off the cart and ran after the man. Half way down the lane he caught him.

“My uncle bids me ask where could we get lodgings in the village,” said he.

“Is it lodgings for man and beast?”

“It is, sir. Bartley has the horse and Tim has a pigeon.”

“Well, I tell you, you won’t find such lodgings in the village tonight. Dan Mulcahy is the only person who provides entertainment for man and beast, and Dan is at a wake beyond the mountains this night and all his family is with him. But tell your uncle not to be troubled by that mischance. There’s room in our house for the three of you and there’s stabling for the horse as well. Tell your uncle

that if he'll bring you to the house at the end of this lane you'll get as good a rest as anywhere else."

Finn ran back with this message to Bartley. They brought the cart to the top of the lane and Bartley shouted out, "Thank you, honest man. We'll come down to you."

The man with the horse went on while Bartley led his own horse, and Finn and Tim walked beside the cart. The lane was very crooked and it was filled with the smell of the elder-blossoms. When they came to the front of the house they saw another man with their friend of the road. He had just come out of the house. This man came forward and shook hands with Bartley, with Tim and with Finn. "You're heartily welcome," he said to each.

Finn noticed that his fingers were long and that his hands were very soft.

"Go inside, children, and we'll deal with the horses," said the man who was with them on the road.

It was a comfortable house that Finn and Tim went into. The big black cat that was lying on a stool before the fire had a blue ribbon round her neck. The hearth was swept

clear, a fine fire of peat was burning on it and a pot of porridge was bubbling beside the fire. On the chimney board two candles were burning in tall brass candle-sticks, and between them was a pair of china dogs. Little white curtains were across the windows; the tins on the dresser were shining, and the crocks of milk on the table were carefully covered. The boys spoke in whispers, for they thought some woman would appear any minute. But no woman came. Finn noticed that there was a low table like one that a tailor sits on, and beside it were sacks and lengths of sacking. When they found that nobody came, the boys sat down at the fire. In a while the two men of the house came in with Bartley. They were both of the same age and build and both wore their beards in the same way—not on their cheeks but around their necks. In the coat of the man who had been in the house a big curved needle was stuck.

“Our name is Muldowney,” said the man who had met them on the road. “I’m Martin Muldowney and my brother here is Matthew Muldowney. We’re born-twins and the pair of us are old bachelor men.”

"Martin goes to the market or fair and I keep house," said Matthew.

"And well he does it," said Martin. "Look round the house! Did you ever see a place as tidy? There's not the breadth of a sloe in dirt in it—not the breadth of a sloe."

"I'm a sewing-man," said Matthew. "I make sacks for the mill." He pointed to the low table and the sacks and lengths of sacking upon it. "We're going to eat our supper now," he said, "and you'll all have to sit over to the table. There's enough porridge in the pot. Will any of you drink tea?"

"We'll all drink tea," said Martin.

"Very well then," said Matthew. "And will any of you have an egg?"

"We'll all have eggs," said Martin.

"Very well then." Matthew put five eggs in two tins and placed them on the fire. Then he filled porringers with milk out of the crock and set a dish of porridge before them. They started with that.

"Martin," said Matthew, "do you know that something happened today?"

"Was it anything extraordinary?"

"It was. The bantam laid an egg."

"The bantam laid an egg! Well, that's wonderful."

"But wait till you hear what happened to it. Peter broke it."

"Did he, indeed?"

"He broke it before my two very eyes."

Matthew then put a loaf on the table with a big piece of fresh butter on a plate with salt beside it. He poured out the tea into big mugs.

When the supper was finished Matthew said,

"Did you remember to bring me anything from the town, Martin?"

"I did."

"I thought you'd forgot it."

Martin handed him a little tin box of snuff. He began taking in the snuff very greedily.

"What about your horse?" Bartley asked.

"We'll leave it in the stable for tonight," said Martin.

"I'd advise you to put it out on grass to-night," said Bartley.

"I'll put it out tomorrow. The pasture is on an island in the lake and I'd want somebody to help me to land the horse from the float."

"I'll help you," said Bartley, "with one of the boys."

"Very well," said Martin.

"Well, boys, which of you will come?"

"I will," said Tim.

"I will," said Finn.

"Leave this little fellow to keep me company while you're away," said Matthew, indicating Finn. So Martin went outside and Bartley and Tim followed.

After Finn had watched the lame horse being taken down a path he came back to the fire and sat down on a stool. Matthew told him how the others would get the horse into a big flat-bottomed boat and cross to the island in the lake. When they pushed into the shore big herons would rise up from where they had been fishing. One would make the horse splash into the water and then pull it up the bank. Tim and Bartley would see the high round tower that had stood for two thousand years.

It was a wonderful island they had gone to. When Saint Patrick was preaching in Ireland a holy man had come to it and had lived on it as a hermit. The walls of his church were to

be seen. The altar stone had a hollow in it and this hollow was always filled with water. The hottest day could not dry this water up. If anyone emptied it the water would come again out of the stone.

Matthew sat cross-legged on the board, put big spectacles over his eyes and began to sew lengths of sacking. After a while of silence he asked Finn did he know any riddles. Finn said he did.

"Will you ask me one," said Matthew, "and see can I answer it."

Finn thought for a while and then asked, "What goes round the house and round the house and sleeps in the corner at night?"

"The besom," said Matthew. "We take it round the house and round the house when we're sweeping and leave it lying in the corner at night. Look at it there. Now I'll ask you a riddle. What bears but never blossoms?"

Finn looked at the crook that hung down from the chimney. A pot and a kettle were hanging from it. "The crook," he answered.

"You heard that riddle before," said Matthew. "But I'll ask you to answer one now that you never heard. Here it is:—

“It grows in the wood,
It sounds in the town,
It earns its master
Many a crown.

Finn pondered on it for a while but couldn't find an answer. “I'll tell you what it is,” said Matthew, “it's a fiddle.”

“Oh, yes,” said Finn. “It's made out of the wood that's in a tree, and a man plays it in the town and people give him money.”

“Well, will you remember that riddle?”

“Say it for me again,” said Finn, “and I'll remember it.” So Matthew repeated it and Finn thought he would remember.

“Here's another riddle,” said Matthew. “What comes in on the shoulders of men and goes out finer than silk?” Finn's eyes went round and round the house. He looked at the basket of peat beside the fire. Then something told him to say, “The turf.”

“Well now, you're a smart boy. It's the turf surely,” said Matthew. “When it comes in it's so heavy that men carry it on their shoulders, and it goes out in smoke that is finer than silk.”

It was evident that Matthew was thinking

of another riddle. But then Finn heard a sound as if something that had a metal throat was making a gurgling noise. He looked round and saw a jackdaw hopping towards them.

"That's Peter," said Matthew. "He always comes down at night when he hears that I've 'company.'"

The jackdaw hopped across the floor and flew up on the board.

"He wants to show his red stockings," said Matthew, "he's very proud of them."

Peter cocked his head and turned a blue and glassy eye on Finn. Finn told Matthew about Tim's pet pigeon. He went out to the cart and took the pigeon out of the box that Tim had left it in and brought it into the house. When the pigeon was put upon the board Peter flew down, making gurgling noises.

"He's mad-jealous," said Matthew. "See! He won't stay in the place at all."

Peter lifted up his wings and fluttered up the ladder to the loft.

"He'd be vexed if he came down and found me speaking to the cat," said Matthew.

Matthew began to sew another sack and Finn

sat watching the fire and pondering on the things he had heard that day. His mind was on the story that Martin had told them on the road—the story of Kate Mary Ellen and the fairies and he wanted to speak of it to Matthew. But when he referred to the fairies Matthew shook his head:—

“The fairies?—Kate Mary Ellen?” he said, “I’ll engage that you’re thinking of some story that Martin was telling you. Martin doesn’t read books or newspapers, and romances are in his head. Now I’m a reading-man and I let them fairy tales go by me. Daniel O’Connell? Yes, I could tell you about Daniel O’Connell. And it’s not the stories that the people would tell you about him that I have. I’d give you Daniel O’Connell’s real, true history as it’s in the books, and mind you, I have day and date for everything I’ll say.

“Well, Daniel O’Connell was born in Kerry in the year 1775—the year 1775, mind you. What sort of way had the people of living that time? Well, the bulk of the people of Ireland—the Catholics—were suffering under bad laws—the Penal Laws they were called—and one result of these laws was that there were no

schools for Catholic children. Maybe you think that it was grand to live in those days because there were no schools? Well, the people at the time didn't think so, because they knew they were denied education so that they might look on themselves as inferiors and people who could never rise in the world. And though the bulk of the people of Ireland were Catholics no Catholic was allowed to enter Parliament. The Catholics had to pay very heavy rents for the farms they owned, and besides the heavy rents each farmer had to pay one-tenth of what he grew or reared or earned to the Protestant Church in Ireland. Daniel O'Connell got the Catholics representation in Parliament, but he did more than that for them—he put a spirit into them, and after his time no one would make them feel that they were inferior to anyone else, or that they could not make their own way in the world.

“At the time Daniel O'Connell was growing up there was a Parliament in Ireland. That Parliament had done something to make the lives of the Catholics less miserable but still no Catholic could enter it. Now the Government in England was anxious to destroy this

Parliament in Dublin so that there might be the Parliament for England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales—a Parliament in London. As the Irish Catholics were not let into the Parliament in Dublin the English Government thought that they would not be strong in supporting it. But O'Connell, who was a young man at the time, made a speech and said, 'I would rather confide in the justice of my brethren, the Protestants of Ireland, than lay my country at the feet of foreigners.'

"Well, the Parliament in Dublin was at length destroyed, and the Irish members had to go to a Parliament in London. That was in the year 1800. No Irish Catholic could go into the Parliament in London either, for although the Irish Catholics had votes, every member going into the House of Parliament in London had to take an oath saying that he believed that what the Catholic Church taught was false. Of course that kept Catholics out of the Parliament in London.

"After the old Irish Parliament was destroyed Daniel O'Connell became one of the leaders of the Catholics of Ireland. He taught them to work together and he taught them the

rights they should have. He showed them, too, that he who was one of themselves was a match for the people who oppressed them for so long. Daniel O'Connell was a great lawyer and a great orator, and in Ireland or England or in Europe either, there was no one his equal at the time. He was educated in France and he saw the revolution there and he knew how terrible the behaviour of the people would be when they had arms in their hands. He was back in Ireland at the time of the rebellion in 1798 and he saw how the soldiers with cannon and new guns could scatter the people who had only pikes in their hands and old muskets. And so O'Connell had always a great dread of bringing the people to bloodshed. He once killed a man himself—it was in a duel—and he regretted this all his life. Maybe this was another reason why he was in dread of bloodshed.

“Now I told you that the Catholics of Ireland had the vote, but that no Catholic could enter the Parliament in London on account of the oath that had to be taken, and somebody thought that it would make a great stir in Ireland and in England if a Catholic was elected

for Parliament and then refused to take the oath. Well, O'Connell decided he would go up for election himself. I can tell you there was great excitement in Ireland and England when that became known. The election was in Clare and both sides made great preparations to fight it out. The landlords were altogether against him but the tenants were in favour of O'Connell. The tenants were threatened that their way of living would be taken from them if they voted for their man, but in spite of all that they marched out and carried the election for O'Connell and for Ireland. The English government now saw that they would have to grant the Catholics their freedom to vote. If they didn't do that there would be civil war, for Ireland was roused up and the people had been knit together by O'Connell. So the Government passed the Catholic Emancipation Act. That was in 1829.

"Catholic Emancipation was a great thing, for the country could come to nothing while the bulk of the people had not the same rights and the same privileges as the rest. After O'Connell's election Catholics had the right to

go into Parliament, the right to become judges and the right to have schools.

“But O’Connell knew that there was not much use in going to a Parliament that was in another country. He wanted to have an Irish Parliament in Dublin again. He won Catholic Emancipation in the first half of his life and now he tried to win back the Parliament for Ireland. For nearly twenty years he strove to win back our Parliament. He did not want the people to rise in rebellion to gain it but he wanted to show England that they were all united and all in earnest. He used to have great meetings all over the country. I was at one of the meetings myself. It was on the Hill of Tara and I was a youth of eighteen at the time. There were no trains then, and the people came on horses and cars, but most of them came on foot. They marched from the south of Ireland and from the north, from the east and from the west, and many of them were two days on the spot, sleeping in open fields. There were nearly as many at that meeting as there are men, women and children in the City of Dublin. And the strangest thing I remem-

ber is this—that I heard O’Connell’s voice although I was so far away from him. Many men at that meeting thought it would be the last he would hold and that he would give them the word to go into rebellion. But O’Connell did not give the word and I think this disheartened the people.

“There was to be another great meeting at Clontarf near Dublin at the place where King Brian defeated the Danes. The English Government were very disturbed now, because they knew that if O’Connell could hold the country together and show the strength of his following at such great meetings he was bound to have his way. Well, the men in the Government made up their minds to stop the Clontarf meeting. I joined the people that were going to it and we marched towards Dublin. But when we drew near the city we met horsemen riding towards us. ‘Turn back,’ they said, ‘and turn back all the others. There will be no meeting.’ The Government had forbidden the meeting and they were going to use troops to prevent it.

“I have read in books that people blamed O’Connell for commanding the people to go

back. If he had let the meeting come together, they say, the government would have had to give in, and then O'Connell would have won the Parliament as he had won Catholic Emancipation, or else the government would have had to order the troops to fire on the people and then there would have been an insurrection. But that would have been a terrible thing, surely, and the government that took such an action could not stand and in the end the queen would have to do what the people wanted. As it was, nothing happened at all. O'Connell was arrested and kept in jail for three months. When he came out he hadn't the strength behind him that he used to have before Clontarf. He was an old man, too, and he felt that there was little more in life for him. He went to Italy and died on his way to Rome.

"It was a black year for Ireland the year O'Connell died. The potatoes that the people lived on rotted in the ground. To be sure they had enough wheat and pigs and sheep and cattle to live on, but they were used to paying their rents with the money they got for such, and living on the potatoes. When the potatoes failed they still sold their wheat and their pigs

and cattle and sheep and paid their rents. Then many died of starvation. The English government at the time didn't like the Irish people and did hardly anything to help them.

"It was well for O'Connell that he did not live to see the misery the country fell into. Two million people died of hunger and disease and another two million people left the country—such misery will never happen to Ireland again, please God."

In a while Martin came back with Bartley and Tim. The horse had been safely landed on the island. The beds for the strangers were in the loft and the three of them went up in a while. The first thing Finn heard in the morning was the jackdaw hopping across the floor. Making gurgling noises he flew down the ladder and sat beside Matthew at the table. He ate the porridge off Matthew's plate.

They started off early and Martin went with them to the top of the lane.

CHAPTER XV

THE PUNCH AND JUDY SHOW

OUTSIDE the village of Monamore they unyoked the horse. Bartley was to get a boot stitched in the village and then they were to go on.

A man trailing a hay-rake behind him came along. He put apart two hounds that had snapped at each other, saying to one, "Go home, Shep," and to the other, "Be off, Spot."

"Those are good dogs," said Bartley, "do you own them?"

"I don't own them," said the man, "but I have to keep my eye on them. Like every living thing in the village the dogs are unmannerly and their conduct has to be corrected." He spoke to a boy who was whipping a top in the middle of the road while his sister was carrying a can of water. "Go after your sister and help her with the can," he said, "and don't be raising dust in the faces of people coming into your village."

The boy darted off, and then turning round he shouted out to the man with the rake, "Oul' Daddy-long-legs."

"It's hard—very hard to keep this village in order," said the man to Bartley, "and I haven't much time on my hands, for I have to be doing odd jobs."

Then tinkers came along, wicked-looking men and women, with ass-carts filled with tins and with unyoked asses.

"I foresee I'll have trouble with that lot before they leave the village," said the man with the rake. Then he went down the village street trailing the rake behind him.

Bartley went into the shoemaker's, the horse began to graze along the ditches and the boys were left to wait outside the village. After the tinkers had passed, the geese and a couple of greyhounds were the only things that moved in the village. Tim thought there must be a good deal of poultry in Monamore, for there were always a couple of hens cackling very loudly. They sat on the little bridge and watched a mill-wheel make its plunging revolutions. Then two men appeared. They were going into the village on what appeared to be

a long box. Beside this long box a very sorrowful-looking dog was seated.

One of the men nodded to the boys. "This is Punch and Judy coming into your town," he said, "and I'm sure the people would be obliged if you went round and told them that we are about to open."

The other man said something in a very hoarse voice. His words were as unintelligible as if they had come up from the bottom of an old post. The man who spoke first had a broad and good-humoured face so overgrown with a day's growth of beard that it looked furry.

The men with the hand-cart went on.

"A Punch and Judy Show," said Tim, "I'll have to go to that."

He and Finn ran down the street of the village. They peeped into the shoemaker's and saw Bartley leaning over the counter and talking to the man who was waxing the thread. Then they slipped past. When they came to the middle of the street they saw the big box placed upright. There was an opening near the top, and at one side of this opening the dog was seated, looking very solemn. The man

with the hoarse voice was beating a drum. Then a wooden figure appeared at the opening of the booth. "Squeak, squeak, squeak," came from him.

"That's Punch," said Tim.

The figure had a big red nose, and while his face remained impassive, all the rest of him shook with rage. Another figure appeared and Punch became more enraged. Punch was accused of having stolen the dog. "Squeak, squeak, squeak," he said, getting more angry. Then the owner of the dog tried to make Toby stand on his hind-legs. Toby lifted a paw and Punch threatened him. The owner pleaded with him and Toby stood on his hind-legs half-heartedly. Instantly Punch struck him with a big stick.

"Oh, isn't he terrible?" said Finn.

"Punch is great," said Tim, "he beats them all down."

Other figures appeared at the opening, and Punch bullied them first and struck them after.

"That's Judy," said Tim when a figure with a grandmother's cap appeared.

There was a long argument and Punch's squeaks became more and more threatening.

Then, without making a sign, Toby jumped down off the booth and went over and sat on the hand-cart. The man with the hoarse voice came forward and remonstrated, but Toby drew in his paws and barked at him. Then the man with the furry face came from behind the booth.

"It's no use in scolding the little dog, mate," said he. "He won't do any more turns for us. Toby sees there's no scope for a show here."

Then, very cheerfully, the furry-faced man began to put the figures in a box. The two men put the booth across the hand-cart and were preparing to leave the town when Tim ran up to them.

"Eh, misters," said he, "do you want a boy to go about with you and help you with the Punch and Judy show?"

"Which of you wants to come?" asked the furry-faced man.

"Me, mister."

"And what could you do for us?"

"I could play the tin-whistle."

"And what about the other little fellow?"

"He's going to Dublin."

"What do you expect we'll give you?"

"Nothing."

"Well, nothing it will be. What do you want to come with us for?"

"Because I'm a poor lone boy with nobody belonging to me and I'm used to going the roads."

"Will we bring him, Arthur?" said the furry-faced man to the other.

Arthur said something that was unintelligible, but Tim interpreted it as consent.

"Hooroo!" said he, and he leaped into the air, and the big silver piece fell out of his pocket. He picked it up quickly but he hadn't straightened himself up when Arthur had him by the back of the neck. The hoarse man was commanding him to leave the money down.

"He won that money," said Finn. "It's his own."

"Won it," said the furry-faced man. "Where did he win it?"

"In MacConglinne's Great Gaelic Circus. He rode the ass three times round the ring and got a pound prize."

"Do you hear that, Arthur?" said furry-face. "He won the money. He has a pound, too. Let the little chap go. He didn't steal, and he

wants to come with us. What is it his name is?" said he to Finn.

"Tim Rogan," said Finn.

"Come here, Tim," said the furry-faced man, "till I instruct you in the Punch and Judy business. It's a great trade and there's nothing like beginning young at it. If I had a son myself I'd start him at it about your age. If we don't make much in this town we'll make up for it in the next town we go into. We often make a pound a day. Don't we, Arthur?"

"At race-meetings," said Arthur in a voice that was down his throat; the sort of a voice that children use when they want to frighten each other.

"At race-meetings, of course, and at other times besides race-meetings. We just send round the bag and it gets filled with coppers. Isn't that so, Arthur?"

"At race-meetings," said Arthur.

"Well, of course, we can be at a race-meeting nearly every day. Now, young chap, hold up your head like a man. Would you like to be partners with us?"

"What's partners?" asked Tim.

"Share and share alike, don't you know?"

That's partners. Would you like to come into the business?"

"I would," said Tim.

"In most Punch and Judy businesses the one coming in is expected to put some money in the show. But seeing that you're willing to help us we won't ask you to do that. Now, if we had a little ass to yoke this cart to we could do twice as much business—twice as much. Isn't that so, Arthur?"

"That's so," said Arthur.

"Well, seeing that's the way of business, what have you to say?"

"Nothing," said Tim.

"You wouldn't invest that pound buying a little ass for the three of us?"

"What did you say?" said Tim. He was certainly flattered at the notion of investing his pound in the purchase of an ass. He saw himself on the road, the partner of the two men with the Punch and Judy Show.

"Oh, would you spend the pound, Tim?" said Finn.

"Sure, I'll get a good trade by it," said Tim, "and I'd like well to be going the roads with a Punch and Judy Show."

"I bring the dog to the show, and Arthur brings the booth and the figures, and you bring the ass. That's the way we work. That's partners. Do you see?"

"I see," said Tim. "And where will we buy the ass?"

"We'll buy an ass from the tinkers. Come on now. Arthur, push the cart."

The furry-faced man got Tim between himself and Arthur and they faced for the field where the tinkers were encamped. Finn followed them. They came where the tinkers were eating, their donkeys biting thistles around them.

"This young chap wants to buy a little ass," said the furry-faced man to a tinker.

"Would that ass suit him?" asked the tinker. "Five and twenty shillings."

"Ah, give the young chap a fair do, mister," said the furry-faced man. "Nineteen shillings."

"Twenty-three shillings," said the tinker.

"Stick to the nineteen shillings, Tim," said his adviser.

"Twenty shillings, then."

The furry faced man winked at Tim with,

"Split the difference and say nineteen and six."

"Nineteen and six," said Tim in a bold voice.

The hoarse man rushed in and caught Tim's and the tinker's hands and clasped them together. "The bargain's made," said he. "Tim, give the man his money and he'll give you a certificate that the ass is sound in wind and limb. Give him the money, Tim."

But when it came to parting with the money Tim hung back. Finn saw that his eyes were glancing round to see how he could make off. He made a dash, but the hoarse man caught him by the back of the neck again. He was saying villainous words in his throat.

"The bargain is made and you'll have to pay up now," said the furry-faced man.

"Where's my nineteen and sixpence," roared the tinker.

His friends crowded around.

Finn was about to run off when the furry-faced man caught him.

"Stay here now," said he, "until we get the little ass."

Just then the man who instructed Monamore came along, trailing the rake behind him.

"These unseemly disputations are not to go on in this village," said he. "These boys have got into the company I expected and I am forced to take them back to their guardian."

With one hand he took hold of Finn, and with the other he took hold of Tim, letting the rake fall on the ground. He marched them out of the field and down the street. The horse and cart were yoked and Bartley was sitting in a very bad humour. The instructor delivered the two boys to him.

"They were with tinkers and show-men," said he, "and if I was the guardian I'd tie them both to the wheels of the cart and give them some good lashes with the whip. Take them away now. We have enough unmannerly youngsters in this village."

CHAPTER XVI

ST. PATRICK AND THE HILL OF TARA

AFTER an hour's journey, Bartley stopped the cart. "There is something to be seen here," he said. "Which of you will come with me?"

"What's to be seen?" asked Tim.

"A hill," said Bartley.

"Oh, if it's only a hill, I'll stay here and take a sleep," said Tim.

Well, they left Tim in the cart, and Bartley and Finn went up a laneway and crossed a wall of loose stones. Then they went up the slope of a grassy hill. Such a wide view as they had when they came to the top! The hill was not high, but the country for miles and miles around was level and Finn could see the blue of distant hills and the gleam of far rivers. Bartley faced him towards the south.

"Look over there," he said, "Dublin is in that direction."

Finn expected to see the houses of the city but he saw only a haze. Bartley told him that that was the smoke over Dublin.

"Do you know where you are now, Finn?" Bartley asked.

"No," said Finn.

"You are on the Hill of Tara."

Tara—that was where the King of Ireland lived when Finn MacCoul served him! Finn looked round expecting to see castles somewhere. But all he saw was grass—the greenest grass in Ireland, and furze-bushes covered with golden blossoms and yellow-blossoming broom in the hedges.

"There is nothing here now," said Finn, "no castles and no ruins."

"No, nor the trace of a single house," said Bartley.

As they moved across the hill they met a priest coming towards them. He was a low-sized man, inclined to stoutness, and he wore a hat that was unusual amongst the priests of Ireland—a very wide-brimmed hat.

When they came near he spoke to Bartley. The priest's voice was very pleasant, for it was musical and friendly. While he spoke to Bart-

ley he took snuff and Finn noticed that there were traces of snuff on the folds of his coat.

“So you’ve come to see the house of the High-King,” he said. “Well, I can show you where it stood.”

He took Finn and Bartley where a low ridge made a long enclosure in the grass.

“The buildings here were of wood—of strong oak wood, but even oak cannot last against time. If they had been built like the round towers, with stone and the great Irish mortar, they would have been standing now. Well, it is over a thousand years since the King of Ireland lived here. And does any little boy now know anything that happened while the Kings of Ireland were at Tara?”

“The King made Finn MacCoul captain of the Fianna of Ireland,” said Finn shyly.

“I see you remember the stories,” said the priest. “And who was the King who made Finn MacCoul captain of the Fianna of Ireland?”

“Cormac, the son of Art,” said Finn.

“So the stories say,” said the priest. And then he went on repeating the description of Cormac that is given in the old books:—

“Beautiful was the appearance of Cormac in the assembly. His hair was golden, flowing and slightly-curling, and he carried a red buckler with stars and animals of gold and fastenings of silver. His cloak was of crimson and it was fastened at the breast by a golden brooch set with precious stones; a twisted band of gold was round his neck and his full collar was intertwined with golden threads. A girdle of gold inlaid with precious stones was around him and his shoes had embroidery of gold. The two spears in his hands had golden sockets.”

The priest took snuff and said, “There was a King for you! He must have looked handsome when he was making young Finn Mac-Coul the captain of the Fianna of Ireland.”

Bartley and the priest walked over to another enclosure and Finn was behind them as they crossed the grass of the hill, and he heard his uncle tell the priest how he came to have the name of Finn and how his grandfather had made him familiar with the stories of ancient Ireland.

“You know all about the heroes, I hear,” said the priest, turning round to him. “I hope you know something about the saints, too.”

"I know about Saint Patrick," said Finn. "He came here to Tara."

"Well, go back on the story and tell us about Saint Patrick before he came to Tara."

"When he was a little boy, Patrick was living with his father and mother in France or in Scotland. Then an Irish Pagan King named Niall⁸ brought an army to the place where he was reared and he was taken a prisoner. He was brought to the North of Ireland and given to a farmer who made him mind pigs in a forest. But Patrick always said his prayers and God watched over him. He heard that a ship had come to a certain place and that it was going back to his own country. Patrick went out of the forest and came to the place where the ship was. He went back in it to his own country and stayed with his own people for a long time. But then he began to dream that the people of Ireland were calling to him and asking him to go back to them and teach them about God. He went back to Ireland and came to the North where he had been a servant boy minding pigs in the forest. He came to Tara then, but I don't remember well that part of his story."

“Sit down on the grass here, and we’ll look over the way that Patrick came to Tara and I’ll tell you what happened to him when he came. That’s the Hill of Slane over there, and Patrick stayed on it the night before he came to Tara. Now the High King at the time was Laery.⁹ All the Druids of Ireland were with him that night, for the day after was the great pagan festival. The Druids were to light the sacred fire on Tara, and all the fires of Ireland were to be lighted from it. In the meantime every fire was quenched and none were to be lighted before the sacred fire was kindled. So when the King and the Druids stood where we are now, they saw no smoke nor blaze in the country around.

“But besides being the Pagan festival of the lighting of the fires, the next day was the festival of Easter. Patrick, when he came to Slane, lighted the Easter fire before the Druids had kindled the Pagan one. And when the King saw the blaze on the Hill he was enraged and he ordered the horses to be yoked to his chariot and he took with him a swordsman and a spearsman and he drove to Slane. And when he came there he saw Patrick standing beside

the forbidden fire with the Gospels in his hand. And King Laery knew that he was a stranger and a learned man. It was against the laws of Ireland to injure a stranger who was a learned man, so the King did not order the death of Patrick. He commanded him to appear before him the next day and explain his mission. Then the King drove back and he told his Druids and his learned men about Patrick and he forbade any of them to show him honor when he appeared before them the next day.

“Patrick waited until sunrise. Standing on the Hill of Slane he held up his hands to the rising Sun of Easter and he made a hymn invoking the protection of the Trinity. Patrick said:—

“At Tara to-day in this fateful hour,
I place all heaven with its power,
And the sun with its brightness,
And the snow with its whiteness,
And the fire with all the strength it hath,
And the lightning with its rapid wrath,
And the winds with their swiftness along their path,
And the sea with its deepness,
And the rocks with their steepness,
And the earth with its starkness,

All these I place
By God's almighty help and grace
Between me and the power of darkness.

"The King's sessions were held in the open air. That day the Princes of Ireland stood around the King with the Druids, and the learned men and a great multitude of people were about the slope of the Hill. Then Saint Patrick appeared and his bearing was so majestic that in spite of the King's command two people stood up to do him honour. He spoke to the King and Princes, to the Druids and learned men and to the people, about the King who had died to save them. The learned men questioned him and the Druids disputed with him but they were not able to overcome him in argument.

"One asked him how could there be Three Persons in the One God, and Patrick plucked a piece of shamrock from the ground and held it up before them. 'The three leaves,' he said, 'make the one plant.'

"The King was satisfied with that statement, and although he did not become a Christian himself he gave Patrick permission to preach Christianity through Ireland."

"That was a long time ago," said Bartley.

"Finn will tell us the date," said the priest.

"It was in the year 432," said Finn.

"I wonder were the larks singing as well that day as they are singing today," said the priest. He turned and gazed on the country around. "It is no wonder," he said, "that the poets of ancient Ireland thought that every great man on Tara was 'the familiar knee of our Island.' The men reared here were bound to know and love Ireland."

He went down towards the road, Bartley walking with him, and Finn going behind. Finn heard the priest tell that his name was Father Niall Gildea and that he had been in France. He was in Ireland for a year's holiday. He liked talking to boys like Finn about Ireland's past. Long ago he was teaching in Ireland and he was misguided enough to give the boys in his charge a contempt for the language and the history of his country. Nothing good could come of such teaching, he said. Now that he was back in Ireland he would strive to make boys understand the worth of their country's past.

They came out on the road and went up to the cart. Tim was lying face down across the sack and the pigeon was on his shoulder eating grains out of his hand.

CHAPTER XVII

THE STORY OF KING BRIAN

THEY took lodgings in a bare house by the side of a road. It happened to be the night of the twenty-third of June—Bonfire Night.¹⁰ Now, as the morrow would be their last day on the road, and as this was their last night outside Dublin, Bartley, to celebrate the occasion, agreed to take them to the cross roads where a bonfire fire would be lighted.

They set out as soon as it was dark. When they came to the cross roads Finn and Tim saw a pile of turf and wood with old people and young people about it. A cart came from the bog and a man threw down more turf and more bog-wood. Before the fire was lighted, Finn and Tim had their first adventure. A couple of little boys were sent to get furze to put round the pile and on top of it, and Finn and Tim went with them. They found a ditch with withered furze bushes placed on top of it and



they started to pull them down. But in the middle of the operations a cross old man appeared and accused them of breaking down his fences. Suddenly he produced a stick and struck at the boys. They all ran. Tim was the only one who held on to the furze bush he had secured.

As they came back to the pile they saw a blaze spring up on a ridge half a mile across the country. There was one fire lighted! A boy that was by the pile ran into a cottage and came back carrying a lighted coal at the end of a long pair of tongs. He thrust it into the heap. The fire lighted. It reached the bog-wood and leaped up into a blaze that could be seen across the country. The children standing by watched the mounting flames with wonder and delight. It was as grand a fire as Finn ever saw. The boys and girls wanted to dance but no one who could make music had come as yet. Someone sang. Then when the song was over music began. It was Tim in the shadows playing his tin-whistle. He was brought forward and the young men and women asked him to play for their dances.

Old men stayed at the ditch holding sticks

in their hands, and the children stayed with them watching the flames or watching the young men and women dancing. After a while Finn and the other children played hide-and-seek away from the firelight and the crowd. Once they came back and found the whole company gathered around a young man who was holding something in his hand. It looked like a piece of iron. But somebody said that it was an ancient sword. Whatever it was it had been found in the bog by the people who had brought the turf to the fire. Father Gildea, who was with the old men, took the iron out of the man's hand and examined it. He said it was a sword and that it belonged to the time when the Norsemen were forming their settlements in Ireland. The people asked him to tell them a story of the time when that sword was used, and Father Gildea told them this:—

THE STORY OF KING BRIAN ¹¹

It was at the end of the eighth century that the people whom we call the Danes began to make descents upon Ireland. Not all of them came from Denmark, but they were from Scandinavia, of which Denmark is a part.

The people who write histories call them Norsemen. They were very hardy men and very good fighters, and they began their attacks by bringing their boats up our rivers and into our lakes and then making a dash into the country, slaying men and carrying off what they could plunder. One Norse chief made a settlement in the west and such numbers of his own people joined him there that he had the thought of subduing the whole of Ireland. But an Irish king named Malachi came alone into his castle one night, seized the Norse chief, bound him, and drowned him in the lake. Afterwards other parties of Norsemen came to Ireland; they took possession of places along the coast, Dublin, Waterford, Cork and Limerick, and they tilled the land and built up important trading towns. As soon as the Norse settled in Ireland they and the Irish people drew closer to each other. From the Norse the Irish learnt many things in trade and commerce, and from the Irish the Norse learnt many things in literature and art. They married amongst each other, and Irish princes had Norse mothers and Norse earls Irish mothers. Irish bards made poems in

praise of Norse nobles, and Norse poets sang the praise of Ireland in their own language.

In the southwest of Ireland, around Limerick, a very important Irish clan called the Dalcassians had their territory. It was the privilege of this clan to form the van of the army when entering an enemy's territory and the rear when leaving it. Two young princes were heads of this clan, Mahon and Brian, a younger and an elder brother. When the Norse entered their territory these two young men fought resolutely against them. But after a while Mahon, the elder brother, made peace with the invaders on condition that they left his territory to his own rule. Brian would not submit. He gathered his followers around him and asked them whether they would make peace with the invaders or enter upon a new war. They all declared for war. Then Brian led his followers into a forest where he formed his camp. From this forest he carried on the war; he ate little and he slept on the ground; he fought night and day and he made himself a great soldier. He won for himself a name that all the Norse dreaded and all the Irish loved.

Mahon became ashamed of the peace he had made and he joined Brian with the rest of the Dalcassian clan. Then they were able to make open war on the invaders; they captured the royal town of Cashel and established themselves there. But a great battle was still to be fought before the brothers reconquered the whole of their territory. There were Irish chiefs who hated the Dalcassians and these made alliance with the Norse and a great host marched against Brian and Mahon. But the brothers were victorious; they defeated the Norse and their allies, followed their retreat and captured the Norse stronghold at Limerick.

Now when Mahon was killed, Brian became sole prince of the Dalcassians. His fame through all Ireland was great. But there was another man who was regarded as Brian's equal, and he was Malachi who had defeated the Norse in the middle and the east of Ireland and had taken Dublin from them. Malachi was an able soldier and statesman and a very noble man. He was made High King of Ireland. But he fully recognized the great abilities of the Dalcassian Prince and he made it his first act to divide Ireland into two spheres,

giving the southern to Brian and keeping the northern under his own rule.

The High King of Ireland had never the authority of a modern king; inside their own territories the princes and the lesser kings were almost independent of him, and could offer resistance to his edicts. The King of Leinster was not pleased with the decision that placed his territory under the rule of Brian, and he rebelled. Brian and Malachi joined forces and marched against the King of Leinster and defeated him in Wicklow. The Norse were again in possession of Dublin; Brian marched against the city and captured it. He had now drawn his conquests from the south up to the middle and the east of Ireland.

Should he now make himself High King of Ireland and depose Malachi, his ally and his friend? No doubt his ambition urged him to do it, and no doubt it was whispered to him that the time had come when the whole of Ireland should be under the rule of one strong king. Brian was not young and he could not hope to live long enough to break the power of the minor kings and princes and make Ireland a

kingdom with a single ruler. But he had sons and grandsons, and these, he must have hoped, would form a dynasty that would attract the loyalty of every part of Ireland. With the whole country united under a single king no foreigners would be able to obtain a foothold.

We do not know how much his ambition urged him, how much a dream of his youth came back to him, or how much his councillors pleaded with him. But we know that the other countries in Western Europe were on the point of finding their masters in single kings and it was time that one king should endeavour to place the whole of Ireland under a single government. Brian determined to take the High Kingship from Malachi. He formed an alliance with his late enemies, the Norse, and marched into Malachi's territory. He came to Tara, to the ancient seat of the High Kings of Ireland and demanded that Malachi should submit to him. This Malachi did. Each king retained his own territories but now Brian had the authority of High King.

Under his government Ireland became settled and prosperous. Schools and universities flourished and important works were written.

It was Brian's design to make a Gaelic Empire that would include Ireland, and part of Scotland. The Norse were still in Ireland, but they no longer troubled the life of the country, while their trade and commerce added to its wealth.

One part of Ireland Brian treated with severity—the kingdom of Leinster. He had imposed a heavy tax upon this part of the country, but he was now striving to make a treaty by which this tax would be abolished. The King of Leinster came to Brian's court at Kincora in the County Clare, and he was treated with great honour. But one day, at a game of chess, a foolish quarrel was begun between him and Brian's son Murrough. The young Prince taunted the King of Leinster with his defeat in Wicklow and repeated the story that he had been found in a yew tree during the battle. The King of Leinster left Kincora declaring for war. Straightway he made an alliance with the Norse in the east of Ireland. The foreigners saw in the quarrel between Brian and the King of Leinster a chance of destroying Brian's power. They summoned their friends and allies from the Western

Islands, from Scotland and from the coasts of the North Sea. A year was spent in preparing for the war. Malachi joined with Brian, and the Gaelic clans in Scotland sent their best fighting men to help him.

The war was decided in one battle that took place near Dublin in 1014. Sitric, the Norse King, had his armies within and around the walls of Dublin. The battle was begun by Brian and Malachi attacking their positions. Towards evening the Norse and their allies gave way and retreated across the strand towards their ships. The Irish forces swept after them and before Sitric's men could gain their ships whole companies of them were destroyed. This was the battle of Clontarf, the last great battle between the Irish and the Norse—indeed the last battle fought in Europe between Christian and Pagan armies,—for the Norse who were raiding outside their own country had not yet adopted Christianity.

But King Brian did not survive the victory that would have enabled him to establish his dynasty in Ireland. His grandson Turlough pursued an enemy far into the sea and was drowned, his son Murrough was slain in com-

bat, and the King himself was slain in his tent by a Norseman.

Had Brian survived his victory, or had his surviving sons been able to carry out his policy, Ireland would have become a kingdom strong enough to resist all invaders. Malachi became High King again, but after Malachi's death there was no king strong enough to rule the whole country. Brian's own example prompted one king after another to seize the High Kingship by force. For over a hundred years after Brian's death there was discord in Ireland. The absence of a strong government enabled the Normans¹² who had just conquered England to invade Ireland in 1169. Dublin was made the capital of a Norman-English government whose policy it was to keep Ireland in an unsettled condition. But it took four hundred years of warfare to reduce the Irish princes and lords to submission.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN

SO well were they entertained by the sight of the fire and by the songs, the dances and the stories, that Finn and Tim were reluctant to leave. Bartley came and told them it was time to go home; they rose to their feet, but then a new log was flung on the flames and Finn delayed to watch the effect. Bartley, in the meantime, strode away. Finn turned to go, but then a youth was thrust into the circle of the firelight and Tim wanted to hear his song. When it was finished the boys started after Bartley, who was now out of sight. They came to a cross-roads without having caught up to him and Tim was of the opinion that he had gone to the left and Finn thought he had gone straight on. A man with a couple of dead rabbits came down the road that crossed. "Eh, mister," said Tim, "did you meet a man on the road you've come on?"

"I did," said the man, "he's straight before you."

Without waiting to consider that the traveller might be another person the boys started after him. He was walking quickly and he kept his distance for a half a mile of the road. Then they started to run after him. Finn and Tim were breathless when they came up with the traveller; then, behold, he was not Bartley at all!

It was past the middle of the night and they were on an empty road. Tim said the best thing to do was to go back to the place where the road crossed and take the other turning. Keeping to the middle of the road so as to be at a distance from the mysterious hedgerows, the boys ran back. They came to the turning and took the other road. Still running they fell over something that was in the middle of the way. It scrambled to its feet and then went clattering along the road. It was a donkey that had been sleeping in the middle of the thoroughfare. The boys were excited by this encounter—so excited that they passed without noticing the house where Bartley had taken

lodgings for the night. They took breath and began to run again.

And now Tim noticed a very strange sight—lights moving across the fields. They ran on, and when they looked behind them they saw the lights crossing the road. Nothing would induce Finn to go back, for when he saw the lights he thought of the fairies. The boys ran faster and faster. And the lights that made it impossible for them to go back along that road were held by a party who had come out with Bartley to search for them.

And now they were on a strange road and in all the wide country there was not a sound to be heard, there was not a house to be seen. They came to a cross-roads with a sign-post and Tim hoisted Finn up to read the inscription,—“To Dublin, fifteen miles.”

Tim recovered his spirits when he found that Dublin was such a short journey. “We’d get there tomorrow by walking,” he said. “We could find your grand-aunt. Your uncle will know that we went on and will follow us tomorrow. And if we keep on the straight road he’ll overtake us.”

The chance of reaching Dublin made the prospect less frightful for Finn.

"Come on," said Tim, "we'll march to Dublin our lone selves. Hurrah for us!"

The spirits of both were aroused and they started from the sign post talking and telling stories. But after a mile of the road Tim's own courage drooped. It was a frightening thing to be in the middle of a silent country at an hour when human beings knew it was advisable to be shut up in houses. An owl flew past them. Then two hounds came along, softly and quietly. They were on a hunting expedition of their own and they did not bark at the boys nor turn towards them.

"Look!" said Finn. There was another light before them, but this they knew was not supernatural. It was a fire in a field by the side of the road. No one was by it; it had nearly burnt out but there were heaps of wood beside it. Tim and Finn came near the fire and they felt it was company for them. They put more wood on it and took hay from the cocks in the fields and sat down at it. An Irish terrier that had been sleeping somewhere near came and put his head on Tim's lap. When

the fire blazed up and when they were comfortable and near sleepiness, Tim told Finn wonderful stories. He told him of fires lighted in the middle of forests and of elephants coming and kneeling around the blaze, and of black men creeping near and chaining the elephants one to the other, so that when they ran they got tied up in the trees and the black men came and cut off their tusks. Then, after the elephants had gone, swarms of parrots flew down and sat round the fire and talked and talked. Then they would get angry with each other and begin to fight and in the morning there would be nothing beside the fire but a heap of feathers. Tim assured Finn he had read all this in books.

The terrier slept and Tim stretched himself out on the hay and slept too. Finn thought he saw a flock of green parrots sitting round the fire. Then he, too, slept. When he awakened it was broad daylight and a pig had come up to them and was rooting at the hay. There was nothing for them to do but start on their journey and take the little terrier (they named him Tiger) with them. Where would they get their breakfast? Tim explained how a

breakfast could be provided. All they would have to do would be to catch one of the goats that were near and milk her. A full drink of milk would be as good as any breakfast. They had no vessel to milk the goat into but they could get the loan of one from a cottage. Meantime, Tim undertook to show Finn how the goat should be handled. He came near enough, but when he made a grab at the hair of the goat he got a puck that knocked him off into a ditch. Then Tiger began to bark at the assailant, and such a row was made that the boys had to hurry off.

They did another half mile and Tim became more hungry. He pointed out to Finn how easy it would be to capture one of the ducks that were gobbling along the roadside; and they could kill it and cook it when they were farther on their way. But when he tried to catch one he was astonished to find how wary a bird a duck is.

Then he was quiet for a part of the road and Finn made him listen to his plan—it was that they should sit by the roadway and wait until Bartley's cart came along. And if the cart didn't come soon they could go into one of the

cottages and explain how they had become separated from Bartley. Finn was certain that the people would know Bartley's name and would give them breakfast.

But this plan was too mild for Tim and he declared he was going to rob an orchard. For another half mile of the road the boys discussed the robbing of orchards, Tim talking loudly about his exploits in that direction. Sooner than Finn wished they came where apple trees appeared behind a garden wall. The apples were small and unripe but Tim did not appear to notice this. He commanded Finn to take Tiger farther down the road and tie him up. When Finn came back the plan was perfected. They were to attack the orchard from the side of the field where the wall was low and they were to approach the point as Indians would approach it; in single file, that is, one after the other. Tim went first and when they were a sufficient distance from the road he gave the word to climb. They climbed the wall hastily and found themselves above a house that looked quite deserted. They jumped down and made for the nearest tree. Tim shook it but no fruit fell; he shook

it more energetically, but still the apples remained upon the boughs. Then he commanded Finn to climb. He was in the fork of the tree when an event happened that made him shake so with terror that apples fell from the branches. A man appeared at the window; he had a gun in his hands and both Finn and Tim saw him put a charge into it and ram it down with a ram-rod.

Finn heard Tim cry, "Oh, sir, don't shoot us."

"Shoot you," said the man, "I'll blow a hundred holes through you if you don't do my bidding. March into the house."

Finn slid down from the tree, and very warily the pair went towards the house and entered a wide, disordered kitchen. There was a big laundry basket in the centre of the floor. The man with the gun appeared.

"Each of you take a handle of that basket," he commanded.

Finn took one handle and Tim took the other.

"Take that basket to the village," said the man, "and leave it at Mrs. Mulligan's, the washerwoman's."

Still holding the gun in his hand he marched them out of the house, opened the garden gate with a key and let them out on the road.

"Tell Mrs. Mulligan from me," said he sternly, "that if the clothes are not back by Wednesday—by Wednesday, mind—I'll shoot all belonging to her. Go!"

The boys ran down the road with the basket between them. They heard the man say, "Remember!" and when they looked back they saw him tapping the gun in a way that had significance for them as well as for Mrs Mulligan.

Tiger barked as they came to where he was tied. Very hastily Finn unloosed him, and with the basket between them and Tiger following them they went quickly to the village.

CHAPTER XIX

FINN COMES TO DUBLIN

THE question of breakfast was easily settled after all. When Finn and Tim had left the laundry basket with Mrs Mulligan and had properly impressed her with the dire message from the man with the gun, they turned down the village street and found themselves gazing into a shop that had a heap of bread upon its counter. The bread was in penny squares that had a fresh smell.

"Would you eat a fresh square, Finn?" Tim asked.

"I would," said Finn.

Tim thereupon walked into the shop with Finn behind him. "I want two squares of fresh bread," said he, "and you might put butter on them, and how much will it all be?"

The man signified that fourpence was the charge.

"Maybe you could give us a pennyworth of

milk too," said brave Tim, and he handed up a shilling out of the pound he won at the circus. "Sevenpence change, please," said he.

The shopman gave the boys bread and butter and two cups of milk, and the change to Tim, who counted it carefully. Then the pair went and sat on a bench outside a carpenter's shop to watch for Bartley's cart. It did not appear. A little stream flowed past the house at the other side, and painted cart-wheels were lying in it, steeping until the wood filled their iron rims. Before the workshop were big wheelbarrows all painted blue. A man came out of the workshop carrying a big slate-colored pigeon box of six holes. He left it on a bench and wrote on it with chalk "for sale."

"Eh, mister," said Tim, "what's the price of that pigeon box?"

The man wrote on it, "Five shillings."

Tim said no more about it. Then the man turned to the boys; he was small and had a hunch on his back and wore a little apron.

"Are you a good speller?" said he to Tim.

"Ask this young fellow," said Tim, indicating Finn.

"I'm going to ask him," said the man.
"What book are you in?"

Finn said he was in the second, meaning that he was in the second class at school.

"Can you spell 'knife'?" asked the man.

Finn spelled the word, leaving out the initial K.

"You're wrong," said the man with the apron. "K,n,i,f,e spells 'knife.' Can you spell 'eel'?" Finn knew that this word was one of the conundrums that elderly people save up to puzzle children; nevertheless he felt that the word had no right to spell itself any other way than "e,l."

"You're wrong again," said the man.
"E,e,l' spells 'eel.'"

Finn had never seen a word that began with two ee's before, and he had grave doubts about the man's information.

"Are you any good at sums?" the examiner inquired.

"I'm middling good, mister," said Tim.

"Well then," said the man, "if a herring and a half costs three halfpence, what is the price of half a herring?"

"A ha'penny," said Tim.

"You're wrong," said the man, "and one of you is as ignorant as the other."

But he was joking, of course, as any child can see. He went into the shop then and Finn and Tim could see him through a window planing a board.

After a while they got up and stood in the middle of the road watching for Bartley's cart.

Many vehicles came through that village but none of them was the familiar red-and-blue cart. Then Finn and Tim turned round and took the road for Dublin. The day was bright and fine, and Finn, although he was about to venture into a strange city without his guardian, was not very uneasy in his mind. The fields had been mown and with their cocks of hay standing here and there they looked very tidy. The birds that had been in their nests a week ago were now in the hedgerows and on the empty roadway—young thrushes that did not know whether to fly or to run and that had remarkable, spacious and speckled breasts; young robins that had no red on their breasts at all, and young wrens that could hide behind a little ivy leaf. The young jackdaws made a great noise as they came down, branch by

branch, from their nests in the great elm trees. Finn's eyes took in the particulars of the birds, while Tim, as they went along played upon his tin-whistle.

They bought bread and butter again and ate it under trees at a place that was not far from Dublin. While they were resting, a ballad-singer came along the road and saluted Finn and Tim. He was an under-sized fellow with drooping red moustaches. He swung a stick and he carried a sheaf of papers on which songs were printed.

"It's a fine day, boys," said he.

"It's a fine day, indeed," said Tim, "and would you tell us, mister, if we're on the right road for Dublin?"

"Believe you me," said the ballad-singer, "you're on the leading, straight, direct road for Dublin. I'm going there myself."

"Let us go with you," said Tim.

"I've no objection—no objection at all in the world," said the ballad-singer.

They inquired if he had seen a cart of the description of Bartley's but he assured them that such had not come within his vision. The boys started off with him then, the ballad-

singer straightening himself up for a march, Tim lengthening his steps to keep up with him and Finn trotting behind. Tim produced his tin-whistle and played several tunes that were greatly appreciated by the ballad-singer. He offered in return to sing any song they fancied off his bunch of ballads. Tim chose "Poor Old Horse," and the ballad-singer stopped in the middle of the road to start the song. After the first stanza the three moved together along the road:—

"My clothing was once of the linsey woolens fine,
My mane it was long and my coat it did shine,
But now I'm broken down, and in the street I go
To endure the winter's cold with hail, rain, frost and
snow.

Poor old horse you must die.

"Once I was sheltered all in a stable warm,
To keep my poor bones and my life from all harm,
But now I'm grown old and nature must decay,
My master often growls and one day I hear him say,
'Poor old horse you must die.

" 'He is old, he is cold, lazy, dull and slow,
He eats all my hay and breaks all my straw,

Neither is he fit for my chains to draw,
Cut him, whip him, kill him, skin him—to the hounds
let him go

Poor old horse you must die.'

"My flesh unto the hounds I do freely give,
My body to the huntsmen as long as I do live,
Besides those active legs of mine that ran so many
miles,
Over hedges, meadows, ditches, fences, gates and
stiles.

Poor old horse you must die."

"The last verse is very pathetic," said the ballad-singer, "listen to it, boys:—

"All nature did its best—it did its best and worst,
All nature it can do is to turn me into dust,
Do not think it hard, not neither a disgrace
If I compare my suffering unto the human race.

Poor old horse you must die."

The road now went between two gate-piers; there were no longer hedges and ditches, there was a green level on each side. The ballad-singer sang the last stanza as they went on this thoroughfare, and then he raised his cane to salute a policeman. Finn had not seen a policeman like this one before; he was very tall and instead of a round cap he wore a hel-

met on his head. Finn mentioned to the ballad-singer that this policemen presented a strange appearance to him.

"You are used to the constabulary of the country districts," said the ballad-singer, "but the policemen you see now are members of what is called the metropolitan force. You are now almost in Dublin. This is the Phoenix Park."

The ground was very green and very level and there were clumps of trees and herds of cattle. Finn saw a herd of creatures that he thought were curious goats, but the ballad-singer told him they were deer. Some people were racing horses and a band was playing the grandest music he ever heard. Tim ran ahead, making jumps in his delight at entering Dublin, and Finn was so excited that he broke away several times from the ballad-singer who was showing him the sights of the Park.

"That is what is called a statue or a monument," said he to Finn, indicating the figure of a big man on a big horse. "You might think that the figures were made of iron," said he, "but they are made of bronze."

Tim was waiting for them outside the gate of the park. "Look at the trams," he was saying.

Finn saw big vehicles with people within them and on top of them, that stood waiting or were drawn along tracks on the paved street. The sight of these trams gave great satisfaction to Tim, and he begged Finn and the ballad-singer to mount one and to go on top. A bell rang and the tram started off. The tram went by a river that had high houses on each side. It was grand being on a tram, Finn thought, seeing the other trams and the cars and the crowds of people. A man came up to them and Tim took money out of his pocket and paid for himself, for Finn and for the ballad-singer, and took three tickets. He talked to the ballad-singer as citizen to citizen while Finn watched the sights. Then the tram stopped at a bridge and Finn saw other streets right and left and before him, while the throng had become greater. They got off the tram and the ballad-singer advised them to take another tram to the place where Finn's grand-aunt lived—to Carrickleary.

He showed them trams going past with that

name on their boards. Had Finn ever heard of the monument to Daniel O'Connell, he asked. There it was. Finn saw the figure of a man high up in the air, and lower down, on each side, the figures of women seated. Finn noticed particularly the woman who held a sword in her hand. Finn thought these figures represented angels. He asked the ballad-singer were they not bad angels, and he explained that he thought they were because they were black. The ballad-singer assured him that bad angels would not be put around the statue of so good a man as Daniel O'Connell. They were not angels at all, he said, but simply figures, ornaments, as you might say, and the whole monument was black because it was made out of bronze and not out of marble. Then he pointed out another monument that was just before them—a shaft of stone that went so high into the air that the figure that surmounted it could hardly be seen—that was the monument to Lord Nelson—the tram started from beside it. The ballad-singer showed them their tram and then presented Tim with a ballad-sheet as a return for the tram-fare he had expended. When the boys

got on top of the tram and looked round for him they saw him sauntering down the street.

The bell rang and the tram started off. This time Tim had to pay a good many pennies, for Carrickleary was a village outside of Dublin but was now included in the suburbs. They went past great buildings and then up streets of shops. Then they came to high houses with steps going up to their doors. How different these houses were from the little thatched cottages of the country! How rich the people must be who lived in them! They went farther and Tim showed Finn the sea, not far away, but just below them. The tram went past streets of shops smaller than those in the city, and then past other streets in which the shops were just as large.

In half an hour the conductor told them they had come to Carrickleary. They got off the tram and began to search for the house of Mrs. Ryan. Tim's inquiries put them in the way of finding it and in ten minutes Finn was reading the name over the shop:—"Honorina Ryan, licensed for the sale of tobacco and snuff."

For ten minutes more they stood outside consulting as to the next proceedings, and regard-

ing the things in Mrs. Ryan's shop window—jars of various sugar sticks, black and white, peppermint, and brown rock; boxes of strong lozenges; bottles of lemonade and ginger beer, hanks of worsted for knitting stockings, song-books and spools of thread.

It was agreed that Finn should enter and inquire if Bartley had arrived. If he had not come, Finn was to explain how they had become separated. Finn entered after some hesitation. The shop was a step below the level of the street. There was no one behind the counter and he was left to gaze on the mounds of potatoes and the heaps of cabbages that were before him, on the barrels with loaves of bread overflowing from them that were behind the counter, on the trays with thick slabs of cake that were on the counter and on the drawers above that were marked "Allspice," "Pepper," "Cinnamon," "Snuff."

Finn knocked on the counter with his knuckles, but no one appeared from behind the door that shut the shop from the room behind. He knocked again and then Tim came in from the street, and taking up a small weight that was beside a little pair of scales on the counter

knocked harder. Then the room door was opened and a woman came behind the counter. She wore a shawl that was knitted in the same fashion as his grandmother's and she had gray hair and a kindly face.

"What is it?" said she to Tim.

"I want a ha'porth of chester cake," said Tim.

She cut off a rich slice from one of the slabs and handed it to him.

Finn had come up to her. "Did Bartley come?" said he.

"Bartley?" said she in surprise.

"My uncle Bartley," said Finn, "we lost him and we thought he'd be here before us."

"Are you Finn?" said she, "Finn O'Donnell?" She put her hands on his shoulders and then she kissed him on the cheeks.

Finn hastened to introduce Tim. His grand-aunt was puzzled by the sight of the red-haired boy, but she took both of them into the room behind the shop. She made Tim sit on a high chair and she took Finn beside her on a sofa and made him tell her about her friends in the country. But Finn gave most of his attention to the room they were sitting in.

There were pictures on the walls representing gentlemen in scarlet coats and ladies in long dresses hunting a fox; and on the mantelpiece there was a clock that had for its pendulum a child on a swing; and in front of the window a wonderful object hung—a bottle in which was a ship with masts and sails and men on her deck. The ship filled the wide part of the bottle and all Finn's ingenuity was taxed to account for its being taken past the narrow neck. The table in the centre was round and covered with oilcloth, the chairs were high and the little window looking out to the back was filled with bright geraniums. His grand-aunt often had to rise from the sofa and go into the shop.

They were sitting down to supper when Bartley came. Finn heard his voice in the shop and then he came into the room carrying the whip in his hand. He was so relieved to find the boys that he scolded them out of a sense of duty only. When Bartley came, Tim said he would go and find lodgings for himself, and he went out and Bartley went after him and gave him the money he had spent on the road, so that Tim went off with his pound

intact, and his pigeon on his shoulder. After he had talked to Mrs. Ryan for a while Finn's uncle took him out to the street and showed him what were still novelties—the street lamps and the gas-lit shops and the tram-cars. The shutters were on the shop when they came back and Finn's grand-aunt was waiting for them.

CHAPTER XX

LIFE IN CARRICKLEARY

IN a week's time Bartley had gone back to Farranboley and Tim had gone to find a relative who lived in the city. Finn was without a comrade in Carrickleary. The suburb seemed very big and very strange to him, and it had many things that held his attention—the long streets, the harbour with its boats, the curious shops. He used to stand at the shop in the evening and watch the man who lit the street-lamps. The man came along the street, touching one lamp after another with a high wand and making little yellow lights appear. It was curious, too, to see the milkman coming into the shop and delivering the milk across the counter. Finn found it hard to realize that none of his aunt's neighbours had a cow or even a goat. The shops in Carrickleary were unlike those in the country towns. In the country, if a little boy went in with a purchaser

he would get a present—a bun, a cake, or an apple—but in these shops no attention was paid to him. Finn became lonely after Bartley and Tim went away but he found Carrickleary more and more interesting.

The first acquaintance he made was Bernard Moran, a boy who used to deliver messages for his grand-aunt. It was Bernard who brought Finn to school and looked after him the first day. He was the son of a railway porter and after Finn had become his devoted follower he took him into the little suburban station. He gave Finn the impression that he was almost the master here, and he showed him the wonderful things it was permitted him to do. He made a taper out of a twist of brown paper and lit the gas in the waiting-rooms. Finn thought it was grand to be able to make the gas light up at a touch. Bernard then took him along the platform, and, climbing up, lit the gas-lamps on each side. Finn understood that the safe arrival of the trains depended on the way Bernard lit these lamps. He had full control over the trucks too and could run them up and down the platform.

Every other Tuesday his grand-aunt went



into the city to purchase stock for her shop. He went with her several times. They entered a local train that stopped at every intermediate station, making Finn think that each stop was the city terminus. In a while they stepped out under the high glass roof of the city station. The first place they went to was the office of the stores that supplied sweets to his grand-aunt's shop. This always seemed a dull place to Finn, for he just sat while his grand-aunt gave orders to a man who wrote them down in a book, and he never had sight of sweets at all.

But their next place of call was very interesting. This was a shop down the quays, that supplied his grand-aunt with boot-laces and buttons, thread, needles and spools. Beyond the counter there were shelves that held little coloured statues. Most of these represented Saint Anthony of Padua, clad in a brown robe and carrying a child in his arms. But on a shelf lower than Saint Anthony there was a figure that greatly impressed Finn. It was an old man with a lamp in one hand and a weapon—Finn thought it was a spear—in the other. He had on a jacket of brown with a

belt, and he had very high boots. The old man's face was very sharp and very white and very stern. Once Finn waked up in his grand-aunt's house and heard a step going by on the street. He was sure this old man was passing.

The shop on the quays was frequented by hawkers—men who carried their wares in baskets and went from door to door. Once, going towards it with his grand-aunt they met one of the hawkers coming out. He was bent with a basket and Finn recognized the face of the man who carried the lamp and the spear.

When her business was finished in this shop his grand-aunt would take him for tea to a glittering shop that had an organ near its door that was always being played by steam. They would have tea in a room upstairs, but Finn could never take his tea easily, for the music below, the people moving up the stairs and down the stairs, and the knowledge of what was in other rooms excited him. When they had finished tea his grand-aunt would take him up another pair of stairs and into a room where there were wax-works. Very white and very still stood the wax figures of men with coats and trousers on them, and their hair and beard

was very fine and smooth. At one end of the row of silent figures there was a thrilling wax-work show, "Daniel in the Lion's Den." The den was wide and coloured crimson on the inside. All around were great lions and in the middle of them Daniel stood in a white robe. Now and again the figure would lift up its arms and the lions would open their scarlet mouths and roar and roar and roar. It was very terrifying. Sometimes Finn was afraid to stay. He was often glad to be back again in the glittering shop where the people, coming in and going out, gave him a feeling of security. After this entertainment his grand-aunt would go back to the railway terminus, but on her way she would call into a church near it where she and Finn would kneel down and say some prayers. If there was anything on her mind she would light a candle and set it before one of the altars.

For about four months Finn stayed with his grand-aunt in Carrickleary. When he was about three months at school the master asked him to enter a class where he would be prepared for confirmation. Finn was nervous but very proud of being confirmed so young. He

could not go into the city while he was preparing. The last Tuesday before he was confirmed his grand-aunt brought him a new suit from the city.

After they came back from Church, Finn and Bernard Moran went down the street, for they were eager to show themselves in their new clothes and with the medals that they wore. When Finn returned to his grand-aunt's there was a great surprise for him. His grandfather had come! Finn rushed into the parlour and found his grandfather in those strange surroundings looking just like himself. He put his arms round his neck, and his breast was nearly bursting with all the things he had to say. His grandfather congratulated him on having been confirmed and spoke to him about his new suit and his medal. The two talked to each other in Irish. Finn could not believe that his delight was real and that he would have his grandfather with him that night and the night after and the night after that again. He wanted him to come out until he would show him the wonders of Carrickleary, but his grandfather laughed and said he would not stir that night. Then Finn began

to question him. How was grandmother? Did Bartley get home safe? Had he anything to tell about Tim Rogan? Had the calves grown big, and was the little kid as wild as ever? And the dogs? And was the setter tracking the ducks the same as ever?

His grandfather had a story to tell about the ducks. They went down to the bank of the river to make a nest for themselves, but they used to come back to the yard. The setter kept a sharper watch than ever on them, and he followed them one day and when he saw them going into the river he chased them. They flew away and never returned to the yard again.

Finn was very sorry to think that the wild ducks were gone. How was Brian Magarry and did he often come round to the house now? As Finn sat there clasping his grandfather's hand he smelt the smoke of the burning peat again and he thought he saw the red petticoat that his grandmother wore.

His grandfather would not go out with him that night but he told Finn he would let him take him any place he liked in the morning.

CHAPTER XXI

THE STORY OF RED HUGH O'DONNELL

IT was to Killiney Hill that Finn brought his grandfather. The day was quiet and misty and Finn was proud to show that he knew every turn on the long road. There was a youth who reminded him of Tim, on the road before them, but when they came up with him Finn saw that he was a stranger. The boy was carrying a little cage. He turned an unwashed face and nodded to Finn.

"Are you going to catch birds?" Finn asked.

"I am," said the youth, showing a goldfinch in the little cage.

"Can you catch goldfinches about here?" Finn asked with great interest.

"Any amount of them," said the boy.

"Did you catch that goldfinch yourself?"

"I did." He held up the cage and the pretty bird fluttered about spreading out wings and tail. "Look at the half-moons on his tail,"

said the boy. Finn could not see them until his grandfather pointed out the little markings that were points in the value of a goldfinch.

"It's a grand bird," said Finn. "I think the cage is too small. Look at the way it flutters about."

"It's a finch's cage," said the boy, "and they're not made any bigger." He thrust out his black hands. "Look at my hands with the bird-lime," said he.

"Do you make the bird-lime yourself?"

"Yes. I make it with linseed oil and Archangel tar. I'd get one-and-sixpence for a finch in Dublin—that's for a finch that's just caught. But I'd get more for this one, for I have had him for a year." The boy left them then and went across a field where he joined some other lads with cages.

Finn remembered that day on Killiney Hill because of the way his grandfather talked to him. They were sitting where they could see the Dublin Hills going one after the other to join the Hills of Wicklow.

"Across yonder hills, three hundred years ago, the best man of our name took his way twice," Finn's grandfather said. "He was

Hugh O'Donnell, Red Hugh O'Donnell,¹² the young Prince of Tirconnal. Hugh died young, but he had a brave life. He was fifteen when he was stolen away from his teachers."

"Who stole him away?" Finn asked.

"The English Government in Dublin," his grandfather said. "A war with Spain was expected and the English Government was afraid that the Irish princes and lords would join with the Spanish. Queen Elizabeth was reigning in Ireland at the time, and the greater part of Ireland was then independent of English rule."

"And was there a king in Ireland that time?" Finn asked.

"There was no king of Ireland," his grandfather answered. "The English in Ireland were not strong enough to conquer the country, but they were strong and clever enough to prevent any one prince from getting all the forces in Ireland at his back. Any one chief that the whole of Ireland would submit to could have put the English out of Ireland with very little exertion. But there was no king in Ireland—there were only princes and lords, and one might be at war while the others remained at

peace with the English. Of the princes and lords who ruled in Ireland the most important were the two Princes of Ulster—O'Neill,¹³ Prince of Tyrone, and O'Donnell, Prince of Tirconnal.

“Now, as I told you, the English Government expected a war with Spain and they wanted pledges from the powerful Irish families that they would make no attack on their power. Young boys did not escape the consequence of war in those days, Finn. The sort of pledges that the government wanted was the sons of powerful lords and princes. If their fathers did not go to war the boys were sent home in safety, but if their fathers did go to war the boys were hanged. The boys who were held in this way were called hostages.

Now when the O'Donnells were asked to send a hostage to Dublin they refused to do it. Hugh was the boy that the English government would like to have in their charge. He was young but he was regarded with great hope by everyone who saw him—he was so handsome, so vigorous, so wise. He was a tall boy for his age, and he had eagle eyes and hair of bright auburn. It was because of the

brightness of his hair that he was named the Red—‘Aodh Ruadh Ua Domhnail, Red Hugh O’Donnell.’

“In those days a youth such as Hugh O’Donnell would be educated away from his own people. He would be put in the charge of some experienced man of high rank who would teach him riding and feats of arms and fine behaviour. This man would be called his fosterer and he would be expected to take more care of the youth in his charge than of his own son. In his house there would be tutors to teach the youth Irish, English and Latin, with history and grammar. Hugh O’Donnell’s mother sought for an able and experienced man to foster her son. She found him in MacSweeney, a chief who lived in the North of Donegal. He was an experienced man and he had brave soldiers under him. Lady O’Donnell thought that Hugh was safe while he was with the MacSweenies.

“But the English Government would be uneasy until they had young Hugh O’Donnell in their hands. They resolved to take him by guile if they could not get possession of him openly. They sent a ship with wines into a

harbor of MacSweeney's territory. When the gentlemen of the district came to purchase, the captain of the ship told them that he was anxious to entertain the sons of the distinguished men. Some youths came on board the ship and amongst them was Hugh O'Donnell. When the captain got him below with his friends he closed down the hatches and lifted his sails. The ship sailed out of the harbour and young Hugh O'Donnell was brought to Dublin.

"He was shut up in Dublin Castle but although he was confined he was not treated badly. He had powerful friends and they were striving to bring about his escape. After he had been in Dublin Castle for three years, a way of escape was found and Hugh with two companions slipped down a rope and found friends waiting for them below. Which way did they go, do you think? Not northward towards their own country, for that way was guarded, but southward, along the hills that you see from this. Forty miles away, in Wicklow, there was a chief named Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne who was strong enough to defeat any English army. O'Byrne protected anyone

who escaped from Dublin Castle. So southward, along yonder hills, Hugh and his companions and friends travelled. The way along the hills is always bleak, but on this night of December a terrible storm was raging. When they had gone half way and were in half safety, Hugh O'Donnell sent his friends and companions on to O'Byrne's stronghold while he went to ask shelter from a friend. But this friend was not strong enough to protect him. He was taken again and brought back to Dublin Castle. After this escape he was put in irons. His friends still worked for his escape. On another winter's night he had filed through his fetters and with Art O'Neill, another hostage out of Ulster, he went through the hills again. The last time he encountered rain and wind, but now he had frost and snow against him. They had no food with them. Art O'Neill had been hurt and his journey was bringing him near death. For three days they were on the hills famished with cold and exhausted with hunger. Hugh sent his guides on to bring help from O'Byrne and lay down beside his friend. The snow covered them both. When O'Byrne's men came to their re-

lief Art O'Neill was dead and one of Hugh O'Donnell's feet was lamed with the frost.

"He got back to his own country at last and was made the Prince of Tirconnal. Of all the leaders who fought in the next war Hugh O'Donnell was the one who hated the English most bitterly.

"In 1595 when he was twenty-three years of age, the Nine Years' War began. Hugh O'Donnell had seen fighting before that. The leader in this war was the Prince of Tyrone, Hugh O'Neill. He began the war by taking a fort that the English had built in his dominions. Two years afterwards a new English commander took the field and planned a three-fold attack upon Ulster. The three divisions of his army were defeated and Hugh O'Donnell, who fought the western division, showed then that he was an able commander. In the next year, in 1598, O'Neill and O'Donnell gave the English the greatest defeat they had received since they came into Ireland. The Prince of Tyrone was known as the second greatest soldier in Europe. The Irish lords were ready to make him King of Ireland. The war went on. In the next year Hugh O'Donnell destroyed an

English army that was invading Ulster by the west. The commander whom Queen Elizabeth had sent over, Lord Essex, was recalled. He was executed in London because he had not been able to bring the war to an end.

“Up to 1600 the Irish forces had gained victory after victory. But now, two cruel and able men took charge of the English forces. They were Lord Mountjoy and Sir George Carew. They saw that the only way to reduce Ireland was to destroy the people by famine. They managed to hold O'Neill and O'Donnell in the north and then they started to waste Munster, the southern province. They killed the cattle and destroyed the crops in the fields. Famine and disease came and Munster was reduced. Next year they started to waste Leinster in the same way. Then they proceeded to destroy Ulster. O'Neill and O'Donnell had sent to Spain for help. Word came at last that a small Spanish force had landed at Kinsale, a town in the south. O'Donnell marched immediately to join the Spanish commander and O'Neill followed. The English had besieged the Spaniards, but now O'Neill and O'Donnell hemmed the English in. It was O'Neill's

policy to starve the English out and not to fight them at all. But the Spanish commander urged him to make an attack. The Irish forces started in the middle of the night and went astray. When they were exhausted they came upon the English forces, fought a battle, and were defeated. It was the only battle the Irish lost in the Nine Years' War, but the Irish forces were not able to recover from the defeat. The country had been wasted by famine and they had no more resources. O'Neill retreated to the north and Hugh O'Donnell went to Spain to seek for further aid. O'Neill kept his forces in the north expecting the arrival of Spanish aid. But no aid came. And then the news was brought to Ireland that O'Donnell was dead. He was poisoned by a man that the English government had sent after him.

“And now I must tell you some of the actions that marked the close of that war. The Spanish general had agreed to give up to the English all the castles that the Irish had left in his charge. One of these castles was called Dunboy. It was built on a peninsula just above the ocean. The Irish garrison re-

fused to give it up. They were only one hundred and fifty men and they were attacked by ships and an army of four thousand men. All the defenders were killed. 'No one escaped,' the English commander wrote, 'all were slain, executed or buried in the ruins.' The O'Sullivan's owned this castle. When it was destroyed they were defenseless, so they resolved to march into Ulster. It was in the depth of the winter when they started out with four hundred fighting men and six hundred women and servants. They had few provisions and they had to fight all along their march. At last they came into the territory of O'Rourke of Breffni who received them kindly. But they numbered only eighteen men, thirty-six servants and one woman. All the others had perished on the way."

"And was that the last war that the Irish armies made?" said Finn.

"No. In the next hundred years there were two wars. Forty years after the battle of Kinsale a new war began with Owen Roe O'Neill¹⁴ as general on the Irish side. He died of a disease and afterwards Cromwell landed and defeated the Irish armies. Forty

years after that, another war began. The Irish soldiers now fought to restore King James to the throne of England, believing that on his restoration he would give liberty to the people in Ireland who supported him. But King James was a bad man to fight for. He left Ireland after the battle of the Boyne. The Irish soldiers fought on under General Patrick Sarsfield¹⁵ but they had to surrender Limerick in 1691. From that date, Irish soldiers took service with the French King and won many a battle throughout Europe. But after her armed men left the country Ireland was sorely oppressed."

CHAPTER XXII

FINN GOES TO THE MONASTERY

FINN'S grandfather was only going to stay three days in Carrickleary. Away in the hills that were at the back of the town there was a monastery and he wanted to remain there for a while. He told Finn that he had become very restless lately and that he thought a stay at the monastery would ease his mind. Perhaps he was thinking too much of Finn's father who was now so long away from him.

When the car came for him on the third day he went out to it very slowly and he mounted it very heavily. Then he drove away to the monastery.

In four days Finn's grand-aunt had a letter from him. He told her that he suffered a good deal from a feeling of loneliness and he thought that if Finn were with him for a while he would be happier. His grand-aunt told Finn that she would take him to the monastery

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on Sunday and that he might stay there a week. Finn at first was frightened at the idea of staying in a monastery, but then he became used to it and he thought how glad he would be to be with his grandfather again.

On Sunday the car came round for his grand-aunt and himself and they drove far away from the town and came at last to the gates of the monastery. A man in a brown garment opened the gate for the car. They drove up to a big building, and another man in a brown garment came down to them. Finn's grand-aunt explained that Finn was going to stay with his grandfather who was a guest at the monastery. The man in the brown garment, who was a lay brother, lifted Finn off the car and told him to bring his parcel with him. The part of the building they were at was not the real monastery. The lay brother told Finn that women were never admitted to the real monastery; so he told Finn to bid good-bye to his grand-aunt and follow him. His grand-aunt did not get off the car; she bent down and kissed Finn.

The lay-brother holding him by the hand and carrying his parcel under his arm took Finn

through a gate which he opened with a key. He took him into the hall of another building. Then a monk who was robed in white with a white hood over his head came to them and asked whom the boy wanted to see. Finn spoke up and gave his grandfather's name. The lay-brother left his parcel on the hall-table and the monk took his hand and brought him through the garden. Groups of men were walking about or sitting on seats.

"They are our guests," said the monk, "and your grandfather may be with them."

They did not find him in this garden and they went into another garden where there were fruit trees. At the very end Finn saw his grandfather sitting alone. He was holding a stick in his hands and his head was bent above it. He did not see them until the monk and Finn were before him; then he did not rise, but stretched out his hands to Finn.

The monk in the white robe, who was the guest-master, went away, and Finn and his grandfather sat together on the seat at the end of the garden. In a while a bell rang and they went in to dinner with the other guests.

There were two long tables in the refectory

and guests of all descriptions sat among them. The guest-master walked here and there, helping one person or another. Then another monk robed in white came in and sat near the window. Immediately he began to read out of a book. It was a story about a saint, but although the monk read very slowly and very carefully Finn could not follow it, for the guests made a great din in eating. His grandfather helped him to some vegetables and mutton, but Finn was too timid to eat and besides he wanted to hear the story. There was a priest at one of the tables and Finn recognized him as Father Gildea.

They had only two gardens to walk in—the garden before the house and the fruit garden just beyond it. Finn and his grandfather did not go with the other guests but sat and talked together. His grandfather talked to Finn about his father a good deal. Next year, he said, he would be released from prison and he hoped to see him.

While they were sitting on the end seat in the fruit garden a priest came towards them. It was Father Gildea. He saluted the grandfather and putting his hand on Finn's head

said, "What are you doing here, little man?" He sat down and talked to Finn's grandfather for a long time in a clear and pleasant voice. They remained together until it was evening and time to go to the rosary in the chapel of the monastery. After the rosary they went into the refectory for tea. No monk read to them during that meal. They went out to the grounds again and walked about for a little while.

Then it was time to attend another service that was called Compline. The guests knelt down in a little corner to themselves. Then the monks and the lay-brothers who had been working in the fields beyond the monastery entered the chapel. The monks were in their white robes and the lay-brothers in their brown habits. The white-robed fathers and the brown-robed brothers bowed before an altar and went to their places that were along the three sides of a square. Before each of them a great book was placed. They opened their books and chanted words in Latin. Then a white-robed monk went before the altar and lit candle after candle—scores of candles, hundreds of candles—Finn was glad of that grand

blaze of light. The service went on and the monks chanted again. But when darkness was growing outside the high windows the monk came before the altar again and put out one candle after another until the whole blaze of light was gone. Finn thought that the monks all became sad then. There were more prayers and then service was over. As the guests went along the corridor a monk who was standing there sprinkled each with holy water. All the guests went up the stairs in silence—a card hung in the corridor and on it was written, “The guests are expected to respect the silence of the night.”

His grandfather showed Finn the place where he was to sleep. It was a little room with a bed, a table, and a chair. The room in which his grandfather slept was just opposite. His grandfather undressed the boy and put him to bed. Then he sat for a long time beside the bed talking to him. He put down his cheek beside Finn’s and then went out. Early next morning he was in the room again. Finn wakened up and his grandfather told him that if anyone called him for early mass not to mind but to stay on in bed for a while. Finn did

this. When he came down he found his grandfather in the hall. He had been to mass at six o'clock. He took Finn out to the garden for a while and afterwards they went with the rest of the guests to eight o'clock mass. Afterwards they had breakfast in the refectory and another white-robed monk read to them.

At twelve o'clock his grandfather went to prayers again. Then the lay-brother who had met Finn when he came to the monastery, brought him with him to feed the pigeons. They were fan-tails and beautifully white. They flew down on the lay-brother's shoulders and picked out of Finn's hands. Then they went down to the stream. In a minute swans sailed up—two large white ones and a young swan that was fluffy and slate-coloured. The male swan had a wicked eye and although he took bread he would not make friends with either Finn or the lay-brother. The lay-brother then gave Finn apples out of his pockets and he let him stay with him while he watered the rose-bushes.

While they were at dinner that day Finn heard more of the story that the monk read. It was about a saint who lived in Poland.

Father Gildea was with his grandfather and himself a good deal of the day. They went to the rosary and then to tea. When they walked in the garden before Compline Finn told his grandfather about the beautiful pigeons he had fed and his grandfather promised he would go with Finn and the lay-brother the next day.

But Finn did not go to feed the pigeons again. At twelve o'clock his grandfather went into the chapel. Finn waited for the lay-brother but he did not come. His grandfather was a long time in the chapel. He sat waiting for him, and one guest after another walked down to him and talked to him for a while. Still his grandfather did not come. He thought he would go into the chapel and find him. As he was going into the hall he met Father Gildea who took him back along the garden. He told him he would see his grandfather in a while. He sat beside the boy and talked to him kindly. His grandfather was not well, he said; something had happened to him in the chapel. Then the guest-master in his white robe came down to them. He took Finn, not up the stairs to the room where his grandfather slept, but through the gate and

into the building he had seen when he came to the monastery first. The guest-master told him his grandfather had fallen down in the chapel; he was in the infirmary now, but he would be well in a few days. Finn was frightened. Then they entered a big room and he saw his grandfather in bed. He took Finn's hand but he did not speak to him.

The guest-master thought Finn would be less lonely if he stayed with the boys of their school until his grandfather was well again. He did not bring him back to the guest-house but into a building that was behind the infirmary. He spoke to a lay-brother there who was called Brother Kevin—an old man in a brown habit who took snuff. There were benches in the hall where he was and a raised platform was at one end. Brother Kevin was instructing some boys who were upon this platform. They were making speeches and he was correcting them. The guest-master left and Finn sat down at a bench and tried to follow what was going on. Now and again a boy would leave the benches and go on the platform and repeat some lines. Brother Kevin was never satisfied with the way they spoke. But at last

the lesson was over and he took Finn into the school refectory where he had tea with the other boys. Those who were at the table with him told Finn they were rehearsing a play.

Finn stayed in the school of the monastery and attended classes with other boys. In a few days he was taken to see his grandfather. He was still lying in bed but this time he was able to talk and Finn told him about the plays that were to be performed in the school. One was in Irish and another was in English. A lot of boys in the school knew Irish, Finn said. He did not know what the play in Irish was like, for none of the boys in his class were in it and he had never seen them rehearsing it in the hall. But the play in English was about the death of a King of Ireland whose name was Connery. The King had three foster-brothers, Lomna Dru, Ferrogain and Fergobar. They behaved badly and the King banished them out of the country. The brothers met on the sea a pirate whose name was Ingkel, and they joined him and did harm in Britain. The pirate claimed then that the brothers should go with him into their own country of Ireland and do harm there, too.

They came to a great house and destroyed it while the King was in it. He was killed and only his little son was left alive. That was the play.

And if his grandfather saw the little boy who was going to play the King's son! He was very small and he was carried in the arms of a big boy. Finn hoped they would be in the monastery when the play was performed and he hoped that his grandfather would be well enough to watch it with him. His grandfather smiled when he was leaving and told him to come back soon and tell him more about the play. He saw his grandfather many times and it seemed he was getting better.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE IRISH PLAY¹⁶

THIS was the play that Finn watched. A crowd of boys appear on the little platform and they are dressed in various costumes to represent the outlaws from the British ships who have come to plunder Ireland with Ingkel the Pirate and the three foster-brothers of King Connery. They are all looking intently towards the left where the sea is. One of them is standing on the stump of a great tree. Now the outlaws perceive a signal below. A lighted torch is passed to the man on the tree-stump. He makes an answering signal with it. Then all the outlaws begin to arm, picking up spears and shields from the ground and buckling on their swords. Having armed they go off to the right. The banner of the Britons—a Red Dragon on a white ground—is displayed left. Lomna Dru, one of the King's foster-brothers is standing

down right. He is bare-headed and unarmed. His brother Ferrogain enters left and goes to him.

SCENE I

FERROGAIN

You are unarmed, Lomna Dru.

LOMNA DRU

I stand here unarmed, for this is our native land, Ferrogain.

FERROGAIN

But we are outlaws in our native land, Lomna Dru.

LOMNA DRU

Since the ships were turned towards Ireland my sleep has been sad and unquiet. This is our native land. We are outlaws in our native land. But our outlawry is little to me now. We have come to spoil our country. Connery is King of Ireland. Once we were King Connery's foster-brothers, and now we have come into Ireland, with

outlaws of Britain, to waste Connery's dominion.

FERROGAIN

It was King Connery who banished us to the seas.

LOMNA DRU

Ours the fault, Ferrogain.

FERROGAIN

Banished from our own country we made league with Ingkel the Briton. This was our bond—that he should give us the spoil of Britain, and that we in return should give him the spoil of Ireland. 'Tis just.

LOMNA DRU

'Tis just, but it is woeful for us

FERROGAIN

Our brother Fergobar is steadfast for the raid.

LOMNA DRU

I will take no part in the raid.

FERROGAIN

Our words are pledged to Ingkel.

LOMNA DRU

I have thrown my sword into the sea.

(INGKEL *enters from left*, FERROGAIN *and*
LOMNA DRU *part*. LOMNA DRU *goes to*
the right, FERROGAIN *down left*.)

SCENE II

INGKEL

Companions, remember your bond with me.
Remember the raid on my country when the
King of my land was slain, and remember,
too, who perished in the King's house.

FERROGAIN

We remember, Ingkel. Thy father and thy
seven brothers perished there.

LOMNA DRU

It was in mixed battle and all unwittingly they
were slain.

INGKEL

Destruction for destruction I will have. (*He comes down.*) Ferrogain, it is given to you that you know every valley, and hill, and mansion in Ireland. Tell me now, what mansion it is where the light of a fire comes from the main door and shines through the spokes of chariot-wheels?

FERROGAIN

Surely it is the guest-house that stands on the road to Tara—the guest-house of Da Derga.

LOMNA DRU

A guest-house is sanctuary in every land. 'Tis wrong to sack a guest-house.

INGKEL

Lomna, when we made our oaths we made no reservation as to a guest-house. Now, Ferrogain. Outside the house are the chariots of a great cavalcade. What concourse would be there?

FERROGAIN

It may be the cavalcade of some sub-king on his way to Tara.

INGKEL

Tara is the place of your High King, is it not?

FERROGAIN

It is so, O Ingkel.

INGKEL

And the High King—who is he?

FERROGAIN

Connery he is named.

INGKEL

And ye were fostered with Connery, the High King?

FERROGAIN

We were fostered with him.

INGKEL

But Connery banished ye from your possessions?

FERROGAIN

It is so, O Ingkel.

LOMNA DRU (*coming to the centre*).

It was we who were in the wrong. From the time Connery assumed the Kingship until we disturbed his reign not a cloud veiled the sun from the middle of spring to the middle of autumn. Not a dew-drop fell from the grass till it was past the mid-day, and in that time, from year's end to year's end, peace was kept with the wolves even. In Connery's reign there were the three crowns on Ireland—the crown of corn-ears, the crown of flowers, the crown of oak-mast, and each man deemed the voices of others as melodious as the strings of lutes, for law, and good-will, and peace were prevailing.

INGKEL

Lomna Dru repeats the praise of Connery's bard.

FERROGAIN

Alas, it was we who broke the peace. Pride and willfulness possessed us, and we went reiving through Ireland. We plundered a poor man each year—the same poor man each year for three years—and this out of

willfulness, to see what the King would do to us.

LOMNA DRU

And when all complained, the King said "Let every father slay his own son, but let my foster-brothers be spared." But at last he withdrew his protection from us. Then, rather than we should be slain, he banished us into Alba. On the seas we met thee, O Ingkel, and we made our league with thee.

INGKEL

Thy voice breaks, O Lomna.

LOMNA DRU

For the sake of this great King who has kept the peace, no destruction should be wreaked.

INGKEL

Clouds of weakness overcome thee. Here is the one we sent to spy. What news from the Hostel, Mainy?

(MAINY *enters from right*, LOMNA DRU *goes down from left*, FERROGAIN *goes left centre*, INGKEL *goes down from right*.)

SCENE III

MAINY

Great is the prey, my chief. There are seventeen chariots lofty and beautiful, with steeds small-headed and broad-chested, each steed with a bridle of red enamel. There are gray spears over the chariots, and those on guard have ivory-hilted swords by their sides and silver shields above their elbows.

INGKEL

Of what likeness are the champions within doors?

MAINY

Two of the champions I have seen before. One is a man of noble countenance with clear and sparkling eyes, a face broad above and narrow below. He has golden hair and a proper fillet around it. There is a brooch of silver in his mantle, and in his hand a gold-hilted sword. His shield has five golden circles upon it.

INGKEL

Who is the champion, Ferrogain?

FERROGAIN (*going towards* INGKEL)

Easy for me to say who he is. He is Conchobar's son, Cormac Condloingeas, the best hero behind a shield in the land of Ireland. Never will he go with life from the defense of his lord, whoever that lord may be.

LOMNA DRU

O Royal Brother, may it not be thou!

INGKEL

What other champions are in the Hostel?

MAINY

One is there who is the fairest of Ireland's heroes. Blue as a hyacinth are his eyes, dark as a stag-beetle are his brows. His spear is thick as the chariot's outer yoke. His is the blood-red shield, with rivets of white bronze between plates of gold.

FERROGAIN

Well do the men of Ireland know that shield. They have given it a famous name. The

man is Conall Cernach. Never will he go with life from the defense of his lord, whoever that lord may be who is with him to-night.

(LOMNA DRU *makes a gesture of dread.*)

INGKEL

What other champions are in the Hostel?

MAINY

There is one whose like I have never seen. He is a man with a strong and fear-inspiring countenance. The shaft of his lance is the weight of a plough yoke. He has a wooden shield covered with plates of iron. Upright in his hand is a spear, whose iron point is blood-red and dripping.

INGKEL

Who is this champion?

FERROGAIN

Well do I know him. He is Mac Cecht. May his lord not be with him to-night!

INGKEL

And his lord—who is his lord?

FERROGAIN

Mac Cecht is wont to serve Connery the King.

INGKEL

Speak—whom else did you see?

MAINY

One sat upon a couch and a juggler played before him. I marked the juggler well. White as mountain cotton is each hair that grows out of his head. He had three shields, three swords, and three apples of gold, and each was rising and falling past the other like bees on a day of beauty. And as I looked, the things in the air uttered a cry and fell down on the floor.

LOMNA DRU

He is the juggler of King Connery.

FERROGAIN

Until to-night his juggling never failed him.

INGKEL

Describe him who sat upon the couch.

MAINY

Of all forms I ever beheld, his is the most beautiful. The colour of his hair is like the sheen of smelted gold. The mantle around him is even as the mist on a May day. Diverse are the hue and semblance each moment shown upon it. A hand's breadth of his sword was outside the scabbard and a man in front of the house could see by the light of the blade.

(LOMNA DRU *covers his face with his mantle*).

FERROGAIN

Easy to say who that man is. He is the most splendid, noble, and beautiful King that has come into the whole world, and he is the mildest and gentlest in it. There is no defect in the man whether in form, shape, or vesture, wisdom, skill, or eloquence, knowledge, valour, or kindred. He is the over-king of all Ireland. He is Connery the son of Eterskel.

LOMNA DRU

He is our foster-brother.

(FERGOBAR *comes from left. He carries a lighted torch in his hand.*)

FERROGAIN

O Fergobar, the King of Tara is in the Hostel.
Mainy has seen him in the Hostel.

LOMNA DRU

Woe to him who shall wreak the destruction!
Woe to him who shall put Connery under the
hand of a foe!

FERGOBAR

He took from me what were my sire's and
grandsire's gifts to me—Freedom, Plunder,
and Rapine.

FERROGAIN

Better the triumph of saving him than the tri-
umph of slaying him.

FERGOBAR

Me he never loved. Let him abide by the
chance that has brought him into the Hos-

tel. (*He throws the torch down.*) Speak, Mainy, and say whom else you saw.

MAINY

I saw a small freckled lad in a purple cloak, one who had the manners of a maiden, and who seemed loved by all.

FERROGAIN

The King's little son. Oh, for the sake of that tender lad refrain from the destruction.

INGKEL

There is nothing that will come to me in the place of the father and the seven brothers to whom ye brought destruction. There is nothing I cannot endure henceforward.

FERGOBAR

Unless the earth break under us the destruction shall be wrought. Neither old men nor historians shall declare I quitted the destruction until I accomplished it.

LOMNA DRU (*coming forward*)

Ye cannot take the Hostel. Neither Cormac

nor Conall will quit his lord, and as for Mac Cecht he will triumph over your hundreds. When he shall chance to come upon ye out of the house, as numerous as hailstones, and grass upon a green, and stars of Heaven, will be your cloven heads and skulls. And as for Connery, though great is his tenderness, great is his fury and courage when awakened. He alone would hold the Hostel until help would reach it.

FERGOBAR

Ill luck has brought him to the Hostel.

MAINY

Beside Strength and Beauty I saw other sights
within the Hostel—sights that would put
fear on those that are within.

FERGOBAR

What else, O Mainy?

MAINY

I beheld a man who had only one eye, one foot,
and one hand.

FERGOBAR

He is Fer Caille, the swine-herd of Bove Derg from the Fairy Hills. Ruin has been wrought at every feast at which he has been present. Say what else you saw?

MAINY

A woman stood by the door-posts of the house casting the evil eye on the King. Her cloak was soiled and smelt of damp earth. Great loathing was on the company at the sight of that woman. "It is a prohibition with me," said the King, "to let such as thou amongst my company." She forced her way into the Hostel and cast her mantle down on the ground. "To-night," she said, "the King will stay with me."

FERGOBAR

It is the ill-luck of Connery come into the Hostel.

INGKEL

What further thing did you see?

MAINY

I saw three pipers who were all in red. Their

mantles and their hoods were red. And their steeds in front of the Hostel had bridles of red.

FERGOBAR

Easy it is to know who these three are. They are from the Fairy Hills, and they bring destruction to the King. Only after the death of Connery can they return to the Fairy Hills.

INGKEL

Omens and portents are with us. Rouse up, then, ye champions, and get to the Hostel.

LOMNA DRU

Not to you the loss which will be caused by this destruction. You will carry off the head of a King of a foreign land and you will escape.

(INGKEL *goes off left.*)

FERGOBAR

I will give my band orders to go.

(*He goes after INGKEL. MAINY goes with him. The outlaws come on in a crowd.*)

They arm themselves from a heap of arms back right. They go off shouting "Ingkel," "The Hostel," "The Hostel," "Ingkel." MAINY goes with them. INGKEL and FERGOBAR cross. FERGOBAR takes up the Banner of the Britons. INGKEL makes a motion with his sword. FERGOBAR goes off right carrying the standard. INGKEL goes after him.)

SCENE IV

(The Music of Pipes is heard.)

FERROGAIN

What music is that?

LOMNA DRU

It is unlike earthly music.

FERROGAIN

It is the music of the pipers who go with King Connery.

LOMNA DRU

The music of the Three Red Pipers from the Fairy Hills. Brother, what will you do?

FERROGAIN

Unarmed I will dash into the Hostel and my head shall fall before the King.

LOMNA DRU

I will go down to the sea and I will let the waves overwhelm me.

(LOMNA goes out left and FERROGAIN goes out right. The music continues. It comes from different directions. The first of the Red Pipers enters from right.)

FIRST PIPER (*chanting*)

Great the story! A Hostel burns! A great King perishes! Soon shall we ride the horses of Donn Tetscorach, soon shall we ride to the Fairy Hills.

(The SECOND PIPER enters.)

FIRST PIPER

What are the tidings, brother?

SECOND PIPER

Great the tidings. Through ancient enchantments a company of nine has yielded. Soon

shall we ride the horses of Donn Tetscorach,
soon shall we ride back to the Fairy Hills.

(*The THIRD PIPER enters.*)

FIRST PIPER

What are the signs?

THIRD PIPER

Great the signs. Destruction of life, sating
of ravens, feeding of crows, strife of slaughter,
wetting of sword-edge, shields with
broken bosses in hours before sunrise.

FIRST PIPER

A hero with nine comrades sallied forth from
the Hostel. I went before them and played
the music of the pipes, and then I led from
battle and defense.

SECOND PIPER

Another rose and sallied forth with his com-
panions, but I played the bewildering music
and led him away.

THIRD PIPER

I played such music that the horses broke from
the chariots and spread confusion around.

(Outside one calls "Cormac Condloingeas.")

FIRST PIPER

The horses of Donn Tetscorach await us.

SECOND PIPER

Come, brother.

THIRD PIPER

Far is the place to which we ride to-night.

(The THREE PIPERS go off left. The cry is heard, "Cormac, Cormac Condloingeas.")

CONALL CERNACH *enters. He has a broken spear. He calls again "Cormac Condloingeas." The cry is heard "Conall Cernach." CORMAC enters.)*

CORMAC

Conall, is the King safe?

CONALL

I found myself on the strand and no one with me.

CORMAC

There have been enchantments to-night, but no enchantment will draw me from the defense of my lord.

(They turn to the Hostel.)

CONALL

Look.

CORMAC

The Hostel is on fire.

CONALL

Let us go towards the King.

CORMAC

One comes this way.

CONALL

Who is he?

CORMAC

'Tis Bricriu.

(BRICRIU enters from right.)

BRICRIU

Good are ye, ye champions of Ulster.

CONALL

What of the King, O Bricriu?

BRICRIU

The King is slain, and the Hostel is burning,
but ye are here in safety.

CORMAC

I swear to you that it was enchantments led us from the defense of the King.

BRICRIU

Show me your shield arm, Cormac.

(CORMAC *shows his arm.*)

BRICRIU

This arm is mangled, maimed, and pierced.

CONALL (*showing his wounds*)

These wounds are not white, old satirist. Still, more can be endured. We will fall upon the marauders and wreak vengeance on them.

BRICRIU

The dawn is coming on the seas, and I see the fleet of the foreigners lifting sails to the wind. The destruction is accomplished. The sovereignty of Tara is broken and the shame of the men of Ireland will be perpetuated.

(MAINY *enters.*)

MAINY

Champions, ye will not slay me. I am of the reivers, but it is I who know the full story of the Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel.

CORMAC

We give you security, Mainy. Relate to us how the King died.

MAINY

I will tell how the reivers prevailed against those who were outside the House. Then Conall Cernach came forth with nine companions and a Piper in red went before them. He made the circuit of the House, going through the reivers as the hawk goes through the small birds. He passed through the ranks and he did not return. Then Cormac Condloingeas came forth, and with him also there was a Piper in red. As the ship goes through the waves this champion went through the reivers. He broke the ranks, and he did not return. Then the man of the Hostel, Da Derga himself, armed his house-folk and came forth. Great and

strong was the fight they made, but they were overpowered by the fierceness of Ingkel's onslaught. Then issued from the house a band terrible to the reivers, a band of men whose dress was of rough hair, who had girdles of oxhide and who were armed with flails, each flail having chains of iron triple-twisted. They were the giants taken by Cuchulainn at the beleaguerment of Faldal. They went through the reivers, their savage eyes shining through cow's hair. But Ingkel called out to them and made terms with them and drew them to his own side. It was then that the head of Ferrogain was flung into the Hostel. The King wept over it. He called in his champion and put his little son in charge of Mac Cecht. Then he armed his harpers and jugglers and cup-bearers, and with the last of the Red Pipers he went out of the Hostel. Good was the fight the King of Ireland made, but a harper cried out that the people of the Fairy Hills were against the King, because the King's father had torn up the Fairy Hills in his search for the Queen who had been brought from the world. Then the harper

made sad music, the music of defeat. The giants turned against the King's company—all perished—the sword of a reiver cut off the head of the King.

(They stand with heads bowed; a cry is heard.)

CORMAC

Who calls?

THE VOICE

Mac Cecht, the Champion of the King.

CORMAC

What do you bring, Mac Cecht?

THE VOICE

The son of the King of Ireland.

(MAC CECHT comes from right carrying the child in his arms.)

MAC CECHT

I lift up the child and I hold him with his face towards Tara. O Royal Child, may'st thou grow in strength so that all strength may flow towards thee!

(They strike their shields and cry out, "The King of Ireland's son.")

CHAPTER XXIV

GOOD-BYE TO FINN O'DONNELL!

FINN sat in a corner of the little hall watching the space that was curtained over and hearing every movement and every ejaculation within it. The hall was packed with people—children and parents and relations and priests. Finn wished that Tim Rogan was beside him now. What he was going to see was more wonderful than the waxworks, or the Peep Show or the Punch and Judy Show. Maybe his grandfather would be able to come in to see it. He was not let see him to-day, but they told him he was getting better. There was nobody he knew in all that packed gathering.

The curtains were drawn aside with many jerks. There was a great crowd on the stage. Finn wouldn't know them for the boys he had seen rehearsing, their clothes were so wonderful. The crowd went away and then the two

brothers talked together. Oh, how mournfully they talked! They would make anyone sorry that listened to them!

Then came Ingkel the Pirate. He was surely the best with his crimson cloak and his glittering helmet! He spoke very strongly, and Finn thought that he might be proud of the way he carried himself.

Then came the spy who told what he had seen. Finn thought it was wonderful that he could remember all the descriptions. Was there nobody who would run and tell the King about all the people who were going to attack him? Finn thought it would be better for them if either Ferrogain or Lomna Dru slipped away and told the King what was being prepared. But no one went, and then the Pirates rushed across with swords and spears in their hands.

Then there was no one on the stage for a while and Finn heard the music of the pipes. How strange it was! Finn would be frightened to hear that music anywhere.

And then a little figure all in red with a red hood across his head came on. He spoke in a strange, singing way and Finn watched him,

thinking he was really a supernatural figure. Another came on and then a third. He had not seen these Fairy Pipers at the rehearsals, and they looked so strange and they said such strange words that they impressed Finn as being remarkable beings. He did not think they should be proud of themselves, for he did not think they were acting at all.

The next thing that impressed Finn was the sight of a big strong boy carrying in his arms the little son of the King of Ireland who had been saved. At this all the audience clapped and cheered.

Finn glanced round at the crowd of people and saw Father Gildea coming up the centre of the hall. He was looking round for somebody. Then he saw the guest-master in his white robe and hood, coming after him, looking round too. The guest-master saw Finn and stopped and beckoned to him. Finn stood up and then Father Gildea saw him. He came over and took Finn into the passage through the centre of the hall. The guest-master made a sign that they were to follow and turned round.

Father Gildea led Finn down the hall.

When they were outside he said to him, "We want you to come into the Infirmary." And then he went on, "Do you know your uncle is there?"

"Is it my uncle Bartley?"

"Your uncle Bartley, yes. And your aunt is there, too."

"Maybe it's my grand-aunt," said Finn.

"Your grand-aunt, yes."

There was something unusual in this and Finn was a little frightened. I think his hand shook. "Is my grandfather going with Bartley or is he going with my grand-aunt?" he asked.

"Well, we don't know yet," said Father Gildea.

By this time they had come to the door of the infirmary. The guest-master came out and closed the door behind him. He took Finn's hand and brought him further down the corridor. He talked to him about the Providence of God, and about his being a brave little boy, and about his not being alone in the world—there was his grand-aunt who would do all she could for him and there was his uncle.

"My grandfather," said Finn.

“Your grandfather had a long life,” said the monk, “he is dead now.”

When Finn heard that he ran back to the infirmary and opened the door quickly. He saw his uncle Bartley in the middle of the floor and he saw Father Gildea near the bed. At the other side of it his grand-aunt sat and she was weeping. His grandfather was lying there with a brown habit upon him and a crucifix clasped in his hands. Finn knew at once that he was dead and that he would never speak to him again.

He did not cry, and that night he slept in a room that was given to Bartley and himself. All night he dreamed that something very frightening would happen to him in the morning. He wakened up very early. His uncle was sleeping restlessly on the bed opposite his. Then the pigeons came to the window and cooed. His grandfather would never see him feed them! His grandfather would never speak to him again.

Finn was an obedient boy and he kept with his aunt nearly the whole of the next day. But when he knew they had all gone into the chapel he ran to the infirmary and opened the door.

There was his grandfather on the bed, and nobody was with him. Finn went down beside him. He cried and cried and slept while he was still crying. They brought him back to his grand-aunt. That evening his grandfather's body was brought into the chapel—not into the chapel of the community where he used to go with Finn, but into the chapel that the public used to attend. And next day there was a long service and a long procession and a long wait in the church-yard. Finn stood beside his uncle and saw the clay put over the coffin. His grand-aunt had a car. She took Finn with her and put him beside her. Bartley bade them good-bye and they went back to Carrickleary.

But Finn did not stay long in Carrickleary. One day when he came home from school he found Brother Kevin with his grand-aunt in the parlour. He had come to ask her to send Finn to their boarding school. His grand-aunt agreed to send him for a year and Finn went back to the monastery one Sunday.

Brother Kevin was teaching him now. He often had letters from Bartley and from his grand-aunt and they often wrote to him about

his father. He would soon be released. And once Finn had a letter from Tim Rogan. It was badly written and badly spelt.

“Dear Finn,” Tim wrote, “I write you these few lines hoping to find you in as good health as this leaves me now. Dear Finn, do you ever think of the times we had together on the roads? I was passing through Carrickleary and I called in to your aunt’s shop. She did not know me. It was she that told me you were at a school. I have the pigeon still. I was in a good many jobs since I saw you. First they put me in a Barber’s shop but I did not like that at all because it was Indoors all the time. I ran away. Then I was a messenger for a while and got to driving a van. I would have done well at this only I took to Fast Driving. I will say no more about this at present. There is a great Object in a shop that I know. It is a Rubber Man. If you hit him he will fall Back and then rise up immediately on account of the balance at his feet. He can hit back. I would like you to see this Rubber Man. I forgot to tell you about the job I am on at present. It is in a Fancy Fair. Do you remember the clown in MacConglinne’s

Circus? The Circus is broken down now and the clown—Mr. Muskett is his name—has a pitch of his own. It is a Cocoa-nut Stall. I help him. Hoping to see you soon. Your affectionate friend, TIM ROGAN.

“P. S. I would like you to see the Rubber Man. He is great.”

Finn heard that his father would come to see him soon. And one day a stranger entered the class-room and Finn recognized him as his father. He was looking very grave and he wore a beard. Brother Kevin brought Finn up to him and his father lifted him up. He told him he would take him away the next day. They went in a train and at a big railway station they stopped and waited for a long time. His father held him while they waited for a train to come in. It came at last. Finn saw a woman looking out of a carriage most eagerly. It was his mother. A long time Finn sat with them while his mother and father talked. Then they took another train, and after that a car and at last they came to Faranboley. There was Bartley's house and his uncle and the children outside the door to receive them.

"Well, Finn, welcome back," said each of the children.

Bartley came with them and they drove on to the house that was his grandfather's. There were lighted candles in the little windows, "illuminations for us," said his mother. His grandmother came out and welcomed them and then cried.

There was Brian Magarry at the fireside, and there was the dresser filled with dishes and plates, and there were the big looms. Finn sat down by the fireside and watched the peat burning and heard the crickets chirruping. He slept that night in the room where the clock that was called "Wag o' the Wall" ticked and ticked. In the morning when he went outside he saw the geese marching off and he watched the calves resting themselves in the sunny garden where the bees still hummed. And there in that country of bog and little fields Finn lived until he grew to be a man.



NOTES

- No. 1, Peat.* A fuel of bog turf and decayed roots, used for fires in Ireland.
- No. 2, Finn MacCoul* (Finn MacCumhail). According to the Irish historians Finn MacCoul lived at the time of King Cormac MacArt, who came to the throne about A. D. 227.
- No. 3, The Feast of Sowain.* Now celebrated as Hallow Eve.
- No. 4, The Children of Lir.* The people mentioned in this story belong to a very ancient period in Irish history, but the story was put into its present form after Saint Patrick had brought Christianity into Ireland in the year 432.
- No. 5, Ogham Letters.* A particular kind of stenography, or writing in cipher, practiced by the ancient Irish.
- No. 6, Besoms.* Brooms for sweeping.
- No. 7, Daniel O'Connell.* The leader of the movement which led to the abolition of the Penal Laws in 1829, when Catholic Emancipation was granted. The Penal Laws were in force from the surrender of Limerick (1691) to the time of Daniel O'Connell, who was born in 1775; the laws against Catholics were a violation of the treaty of Limer-

ick, the articles of which guaranteed toleration to the Catholics, with security of their estates and the right to enter the professions.

No. 8, King Niall. It was he who brought St. Patrick into Ireland as a captive. He began to reign in the year 379 A.D. He is called "King Niall of the Nine Hostages," in Irish history, because he took hostages from several provinces in Ireland and Scotland which he had subdued. He also invaded England and France.

No. 9, King Laery (Laeghaire). He reigned from A.D. 430 to A.D. 460. In his reign Saint Patrick returned to Ireland as the apostle of Christianity.

No. 10, Twenty-third of June. St. John's Eve. The twenty-fourth of June is Midsummer Day.

No. 11, King Brian. He won his first great victory over the Norse in 968. In the year 998 he and King Malachi divided Ireland between them. In the year 1002 he became High King. In the year 1014 he defeated the Norse at the battle of Clontarf. He was killed after this battle.

No. 12, The Normans. They came into Ireland in 1170.

No. 13, Hugh O'Donnell and Hugh O'Neill. Hugh O'Donnell was made a captive in 1587. He and Hugh O'Neill began their war against the English in 1595 and won the battle of the Yellow Ford in 1598. They were defeated at the battle of Kinsale in 1602.

No. 14, Owen Roe O'Neill. The war in which he took part began in 1641. He won the battle of Benburb in 1646. He died in 1649. This war ended in 1652.

No. 15, Patrick Sarsfield. The war in which he was one of the leaders began in 1690. The Irish were defeated at the battle of Aughrim in 1691. In the same year the Irish surrendered the city of Limerick in accordance with a treaty by which the Irish Catholics would have religious freedom and the right to hold their estates. The treaty was broken by the English. The Irish soldiers then took service abroad with France and Austria and were the means of defeating English armies on the continent. At home the Irish Catholics were very severely oppressed under the Penal Laws.

No. 16, The Irish Play. This is a dramatic arrangement of the saga, "The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel"; it was put into this form in order that it might be acted by school boys.

Connery, King of Ireland, was fostered with the grandsons of Donn Desa, and "whatever meal was prepared for him, the four of them would go to it. . . . The same raiment and armour and colour of horses had the four." When he was given the kingship certain prohibitions were placed on Connery, one of the prohibitions being that no rapine should be wrought in his reign. The grandsons of Donn Desa took to marauding, and

thieved from a man every year for three years. Finally they were seized and brought to Tara. To avoid condemning them to death the King banished them to the seas. The outlaws met Ingkel, a man banished out of Britain, and made an alliance with him. The confederates raided Britain, and in the raid Ingkel's father and seven brothers were slain. Ingkel claimed the spoil of Ireland as a recompense.

Now Connery had gone into Thomond to settle a quarrel between two chiefs, thereby breaking one of his prohibitions. On the return to Tara, other prohibitions were broken, and Connery's cavalcade journeyed towards the Hostel of Da Derga, ill-omened figures going with them. In the meantime the pirates had landed, and Ingkel claimed the spoil of the Hostel as his due. A spy was sent to the Hostel. Two of the foster-brothers, Ferrogain and Lomna Dru, were loth to attack, but Fergobar and Ingkel were steadfast for the raid. The attack was made, the Hostel was burnt, and the King of Tara slain.

The place where the outlaws landed was Fuirbthe, the Merrion Strand of today. The Hostel was situated on the Dodder, probably near the present Donnybrook Bridge. The date was about the time of Our Lord.

The dramatic version is based on the translation by Whitley Stokes, published in the *Revue*

Celtique, Vol. 22. In many of the speeches the actual words of the saga as translated by Stokes have been used. Something has also been taken from Ferguson's fine poem, "Conary."



